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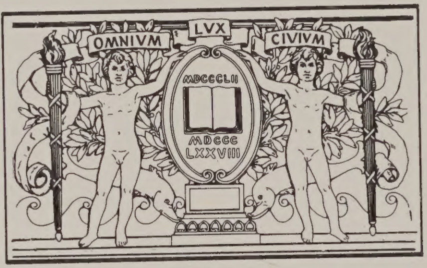
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Transcript Summary of B.R.A. - Urban Systems Planning Seminar

November 15, 1973

An Overview of the 1975-1985 Boston Plan

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Hank Emerson: Today Alex Ganz is going to give us an overview of the BRA planning effort, and then we'll ask Lou Alfeld to move a alittle and we'll take time for comments and questions from all of you.

Alex Ganz: I think we're here together as a very auspicious mement. The prospects and recent trends of the city's economy and the population are extraodinary. We've made a recent update of the information contained in the too long document that was distributed to you, but it all indicates, that Boston is go, go, go, and I will cite some of the facts and trends in a very summary fashion.

We're interested in the trends and prospects as the background for planning and development program and policy. Here the significant event is the major new planning and development effort that the city is engaged in-which is also auispicious because of a very large private sector as well as public sector commitment to the city's future as evidence by large investments plans underway and proposed.

Today's session will be an overview of trends and prospects and plans and origrams with the notion that in the bi-weekly sessions that are planned we can go into more depth in each area. The next session for example will be devoted to the downtown plan and the session after that to neighborhood development strategy. And I mention these, because these are two pillars of the city strategy for Boston's future. Essentially the one provides the growing base for jobs and income. And the other relates to improving the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods, drawing on the factors of strength flowing from the growth in jobs and income.

Let me say a word about how the city is approaching its development strategy. It's essentially centered in these two elements that I mentioned. The strategy is based on the very good prospect for reinforcing the growth of the service based economy of Boston which has been gaining jobs for more than ten years now; and the more recent rebirth of the city as a place to live involving the reversal of two decades of population decline-the new growth of population since 1970.

These are the key elements of Boston strategy and they differ from our situtation a decade ago. A decade ago, the city was in full decline, loosing jobs, loosing population and experiencing increasing obsolescence in public facilities that moment development strategy centered on redevelopment in inner city and certain older neighborhoods as the core of attempting to reverse the trend to decline. Today we're in quite a different situation. The city's economy is expanding-more rapidly in recent years that even in the recent past-with very good prospects for the future. Population is now growing, and our strategy now calls for focusing on upgrading the quality of life in all of the city's neighborhoods, in contrast with the concentration on certain neighborhoods in the stragety of the 1960's.

Another feature of the strategy of the 70's is the large private sector role, larger than that in the 60's. This is the key feature of the development potential that we have now. Well, so much for strategy and the differences from the 60's. Let me tell you a little about the plans and programs and the trends and prospects on which they're based.

Boston's Economy-First, the city's economy. We've been taking a new look at what's been happening and it all looks good. Boston's office industry is expanding more repidly than ever. In the last three years Boston built and absorbed almost 5 million square feet of space, signifying a net growth of 20 to 25 thousand jobs. And Boston's office industry is healthy. Vacancy rates for class A space has been falling. The future prospects for growth in space are outstanding. We will get another 6 to 7 million square feet of space over the next three years and there are 12,000,000 square feet of office building space on the line.

Boston's office industry differs from that of other large cities. A much smaller share is based on speculative building. There is a much larger relative concentration of the metropolitian area's office industry in the core area in Boston than is the case in other metropolitian areas. So, we have the same features of strength which will be generating thousands of jobs over the next few years.

Another important development is the revival of Boston's retail trade. Boston's retail trade had ceded mich of its market, much of its metropolitian region market, to the suburban communities of the years. But we can now report-based on a recent study that we completed and that will be available soon-that the decline in retail trade has halted and there are clear signs of growth in the years ahead. Retail trade in Boston's Back Bay has doubled since 1967 and is expected to double again in the next 10 years. Overall the greater downtown retail trade activity is expected to grow by one third over the next ten years.

Another important feature of the economy is the growth in visitors. Our visitor growth has been expanding will almost double for the 75-76 bicentennial celebration. It will remain at levels higher than present after that.

Another important feature has been the development of cultural and art activities. These experienced very substantial expansions in both facilities and attendance in hte last ten years. There are alot of plans for facilities expension over the next ten years with projected growth in attendence also.

One weak spot in our economy in Boston of course, is manufacturing where we've lost almost 40 thousand jobs since 1950 and we stillare loosing jobs. But our analysis shows that manufacturing can thrive in Boston and can be competitive. We have an ambitious program in Gerry Bush's Economic DEvelopment and Industrial Corporation to create work centers to induce the return of the market of manfacturing jobs to Boston.

Downtown Plan-Now all of this leads to the importance of our downtown plan in the making. Boston's economy is largly centered in downtown. The downtown has been emerging in the last decade as a concentrated center of economic growth-not only of all of the activities I've just reviewed, but alos as Boston's prime expanding residential center. We've been fashioning a new downtown plan which has the purpose of attempting to encourage and facilitate the growth of the downtown and its importance role in the city's economy.

I would like to draw your attention to a rather schematic chart that we have here taht shows in a very rough way one of the important concepts of downtown development. Basically we defined areas for conservation preserving the cities historical architectural areas and areas of growth-those in decline and ripe for redevelopment for the very ambitious downtown plan which calls for 12 to 14 million feet of office space, one third growth in retail sales, and 15 to 25 thousand residential dwellings, can be accomplished while preserving all of the heritage that we all hold very dear.

The downtown plan is based on some new concepts of incentive zoning used elsewhere but new to Boston, Iwon't go into any more detail on this right now. We will have one session that will bedevoted fully to the downtown plan and it's importance to Boston.

Population Changes-The other aspect I'd like to emphasize now are some of the things that have been happening to the city's population. We have a few charts for this too. Basically, while Boston was gaining jobs all during the 1960's, it continued to loose population until about 1970. But since 1970, we've been gaining

an important margin of population. Chart - shows some of the features of the population growth since 1970. There are two features I would like to draw to your attention to. The big drop in the 35 to 64 year old age group between 1960 and 1970 was the large outflow of middleclass families. In contrast, I'd like to draw your attention to what's happening to the 25 to 34 year olds since 1970. This has been the big center of population growth since 1970. In reflects middle class, largely professional, young workers, who are chapturing some of the jobs in Boston, and are deciding to live in the city.

What happened since 1970 is also part of the national phenomenon. Nationally the big growth in population in the 70's will be concentrated in the 25 to 34 year old age group. (These are projections of the U.S. bureau of the cencus.) And this is what's been happening in Boston. This contrasts with the last two decades where big population growth was in the under nineteen age group.

The growth in the under 19 age group had spurred suburbanization. Now we have a concentration of growth in a different kind of age group-with different life styles-frequently ehibiating a preference to living in the city. This new kind of strength which reflects other things happening in Boston: the growth in jobs; the growth in income; and the upgrading of public facilities. The commitment of the Mayor to revive the neighborhoods is a feature of the growth in population in Boston and espically the return to Boston of 25 to 34 year olds.

Now, I'd like to show you the other feature of this population growth. What's notable is that the new growth is largly concentrated in the more centrally located neighborhoods. The city core area and the neighborhoods of young singles, young marrieds and the elderly. These are the professionals with jobs coming into the city and the group that is making the centrally located neighborhoods the prime expanding residential area of the city.

But we can see factors of strength in other neighborhoods too. The transitional neighborhoods, neighborhoods that had received the impact of the flow of population from inner city neighborhoods in the last decade, also reflect growth. This is partially a continuation of trends of the last decade, but partly due to the 25 to 34 year olds.

What perhaps is even more significant is what's happening to older neighborhoods. They experienced a large loss in the last decade. Now they're experiencing a modest gain. And this again reflects the factors of strength: the jobs, the income, the public facilities that are stablizing our old neighborhoods. Similarly, our inner city neighborhoods, which had experienced the largest concentrated loss in the 60's, have virtually halted their decline. Again reflecting factors of strength.

On the other hand we have an interesting and potentially dangerous phenomenon in our suburban type neighborhoods. These neighborhoods with population of higher income levels, are losing population and this has signaled to city government: we'd better take great pains to do what we can to upgrade the quality of life in our suburban type neighborhoods if we are to hold on to the middle class families there. The city's program of public facilities, code enforcement and other aspects, is being tailored to meet that challenge.

Based on these kinds of population changes the city has designed a strategy for neighborhood decelopment. The strategy involves the idea that we can do good things in all of the city's neighborhoods, with duw respect to the differential potential and prospects for each neighborhood. I would just like to point to a series of charts that show the 10 year public facilities program for our dispersal of the wide range of activities in the way of schools and other community facilities that the city is building and will build in the next ten years, as one of the pillars

of the neighborhood development strategy.

The other pillars are what the private sector is doing in the way of housing and other kinds of private investment and institutional development. Basically we have a lot going, both in the public sector and private sector in all of the cities neighborhoods. We have an ambitious program to achieve meaningful goals in all of the city's neighborhoods.

In the course of our seminar series we will deal with many aspects of these plans. We'll deal with the neighborhoods strategy, the housing program, the public facilities and the city's transportation plan-which is quite substantial. We'll deal with education reform and other things.

Investment Plans-I'd just like to cite one other aspect in this prelimary session. Chart - summarizes investment actually underway and planned by both the public and private sector. This is the commitment. This information was obtained from a very systematic survey of projects planned by the public and private sector over the next several years. On the right hand part of the chart we have the kind of ten year targets we think the city is capable of achieving. 12-14 billion dollars in investment, public and private sector, over the next several years. These goals are ambitious, there're doable, there's fesable. We will be examining these goals in the next session. What these goals mean is that there will be a better Boston-it's already underway with a large public and private sector commitment to do many things.

I just want to cite a couple of the features of this analysis. Basically, the city's own financial contribution to the program will amount to about 7% of the total program. The &% will fianance of the city public facilities investment which will make up 14% of the total uses. The differences between the 7% and the 14% reflecting essentiallt other public sector, mainly state and federal financing in city public facilities. Now this 7% is a small part of the total but it's key part, it's the catalist part, the fulcrum part, the part that will represent policy and planning and leadership, and the part that will be essential in the mobilation of the other 93%.

Another feature of this analysis should be mentioned. A similar analysis of the downtown plan shows that roughly 3/4 of the total investment and financing will be private. For the city as a whole, it's roughly 50-50.

What weighs very heavily in the plan is the large roel of transportation, some $2.7 billion. We're counting on federal funancing for most of that. Another aspect that weighs heavily is the role of state financing for the school program. Basically, though what this "sources and uses of funds" andalysis says is that the program is finacially feasable although there are many hurdles to be overcome in achieving it. There are problems of the private money market and there are problems of whether federal and state government will be doing over the next years the kinds of things we have legitimate right to expect that they ought to be doing. At any rate, let me conclude on this point, and turn the chair back to Hank.

Hank Emerson: Urban Systems Laboratory Reaction- Everything sounds exciting and great. Yet we all know the best of plans don't always do what we hope they will. In fact one of the basic tenants of the Forrester work in urban dynamics has been that in many cases people who have tried to intervene in the problems of an urban setting have actually identified problems and taken what they thought what was corrective action, and according to the Forrester philosophy in many cases-that corrective action has actually made the problems worse.

We hope to do is add a little different demension to this tyoe of dialogue we're planning in the coming months not just taking everyting on face value here from the city's planning department and the city's research department-and even adding a little spice from Jerry Bush. We're going to depand on M.I.T. to try to act as the gadfly and tell us what's wrong with the direction we're heading in-if there is anything wrong. Are we doing things, or are we on the verge of doing things that are going to make Boston less desirable" Interfere with economic growth? Or what not? So we're going to be testing what the B.R.A. and the mayor's office suggest in the way of growth of the city against what M.I.T. Urban Systems Laboratory philosophy thinks might be the outcome of those actions.

Lou Alfeld you might care to give a little preview of how you feel that the urban dynamics philisophy is gping to fit into this dialogue and any other general comments you'd like to make.

Lou Alfred: Let me say that M.I.T. is not going to be able to tell where things are wrong necessarily or act in a role of critic so much as I think the thing that urban dynamics can contribute to this review of planning for Boston is to help raise some important questions-perhpas from a different perspective than we normally use to approach urban planning; to help raise questions and structure issues and discussion that may be fruitful in looking ahead to the perhpas unintended or as of yet undiscovered consequences of some of the plans and actions that the city and private sector may consider undertaking. Out of it we hope to come up with a better mental model or image of what this city is all about; how it really works and the kinds of actions-a better direction I might say-or more confidence in the direction it will be taking in the future in actually implementing policies to achieve the particular goals that we have identified.

I have sent out to all of you a paper that was recently written with urban dynamics as it was applied to Lowell, Massachusetts in attempt to sort of look at policy recommendations and suggestions for the city of Lowell that come out of about a year and a half study that we have undertaken of Lowell for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The reason that I chose that particular document to send out as a introduction to urban dynamics was exactly because it does take us a little further down the road of how an urban dynamics viewpoint in more borad or comprehensive prespective of urban planning- may be used to help identify specific policy issies and ite together some generally distant points in planning, for example transportation, education, jobs and housing. However this might be tied together, so each policy reenforces the other in moving toward goals.

I do not mean that the policy suggestions in that Lowell paper should be applied to Boston. I think that the process by which those policy recommendations were arrived at and the logic behind them will serve to clarify the role of urban dynamics in future meetings: perhpas in raising issues and trying to pull things together.

I also want to say that the paper was written in a tone which is suggestive. This was for HUD's consumption, since HUD particulary told us not to make policy recommendations for Lowell. We wrote it in the tone of: if we were making recommendations this might be the sort of thing we would do. I didn't mean by putting that tone in the paper to suggest we were giving ourselves a way out; to say that even though we wrote that it isn't what we really meant. I think you can read the paper in terms of these are the recommendations we would make to Lowell if we had to make recommendations today. That paper might also represnet kind of an intermediate stage trhough this project may pass at some future point in terms of trying to tie together different items in Boston's policies and strategies. Trying to pull things together, we may at some point have documents like that pertaining

to Boston.

Hopefully the eventual outcome of the work here will go even further. We can be much more specific in recommendations on plans that we would like to make. Since I doubt if very many people here have actually read that paper, I'll just take one moment to react to a given example of the focus that this discussion may take and the kinds of discussions that we'll be relying on. You people in the audience to bring up as far as the work both Alex and I will be presenting.

Goals Are Key-We looked at the trends in Boston as a growth of population and growth of jobs in the service industry. One of the things that we want to look at in discussing goals for the city is what kind of a population or how many people do we really wnat to live in the city. I'm sure you would all agree that the character of the city as a place to live will be entirely different if it has 1/2 million people in that 67 square miles or 3/4 of a million people or a million people.

The kinds of services that will have to be required; the government structures; the interaction between people; are going to be different, depending on the population density, where people live and how many there are. The trends in population growth are considered good if the goal of the city is to increase it's total population for meeting other goals. But each population level of course carried with it certain "trade offs", I'll be using that word often in discussions-in terms of other goals that can't be achieved. You always manage to pay something or give up something for everything that you do achieve. And certainly the efforts, on the part of the Boston Administration and the B.R.A. to improve the quality of life in Boston are very commendable and very desirable goals for the city. But in trying to acheive the -igher quality of life for BOston residents and for the Boston business community-in terms of business astomphere-we want to make certain that the policies don't wind up being self defeating by making the city so attractive that we draw in so many people that the population of the city rises to a million or a million and a half or however many it be, such that the just by the sheer weight of numbers we wind up defeating the purpose and so changing the character of Boston in the future to make it look perhaps more like New York City is today.

These are the kinds of issues that I'll be raining in my role as question raiser. I really don't have answers for questions. I think that answers, resolution of issues, have to come from you people who will be discussing the issues.

The question of goals I have already raised with Alex and some others in terms of the paper that the B.R.A. has prepared. It lists many goals that Boston would like to achieve. One of the early things that this group should focus on are exactly what are these goals? Can we get more specific with them? So many jobs, jobs for who? How many residents employed? What do these goals mean in terms of "trade offs" between each other" Can we actually achieve all goals simultaneously?

One of the tenants of urban dynamics has been there is no city that can ever, be a utopia. Utopian planning and utopian cities don't exist, because as soon as you manage to improve all the conditions in the city to make life pleasant for everyone you succeed in attracting everyone to mive in. And the very fact that more people move in tends to degrade the quality of life and put more strain on all of the services in things that you provide for.

In looking at plans in the future, in looking at the capital investments and schools and so on, we'll want to be looking at the match between what is planned and possible changes in the future population in the city. Will those services in fact draw in more residents" Will we be able to stablizie neighborhoods in terms of population densities, such that there is a match between services and people?

Who are the people living there" Their incomes" Their jobs" Where do they work? How do they move back and forth?

Hank Emerson: Well there you see the enigma. On the one hand we have exciting plans to create a new renewal of Boston and on the other hand maybe anything we do is hopeless. This is kind of the two ends and somewhere in between those of us who are interested in the city will be doing something-and we hope we'll be doing something that will be good. Jim Kelso you've done alot of work on Boston planning, do you have anything you'd like to add to the discussion today?

Jim Kelso: I think the B.R.A. is doing alot of thinking. Some of us have been working on the downtown plan very hard and I think it has got a great deal of merit. Some of what can come out of it may keep Dun Gifford a lot happier.

Dunn Gifford: On that I might just make the point to you Hank. I note that on the list that I am the only representive of the real estate development fraternity. Since so much of the downtown plan, as we generally conceive it and has been outlined by ALex invloves the real estate development fraternity, it might be helpful to try and add some more members. The industry in Boston does not view the private commerical office space market in the same way that this preliminary draft document does. In fact the views of the industry are significantly divergent from some of the statements here. And if it is a principal of the plan itself the continued growth of the commerical office space and the service jobs that it draws, if that is one of the basic tenants I think it may be helpful Alex, to spend some time with the industry itself. I just want to emphasize to everybody here the industry does not view the future in the near term, that is to say five yearsm six years-to take the cycle of the building from beginning to end-in the same way that your document does.

There are a lot of resaons for it. A very current one for everyone's information is the energy vrisis. You can not, for example, get a long term commitment from the Boston Edision Company for the delivery of steam- which is the power and energy source for any major building. Without that commitment from Bsoton Edision, you cannot get a mortgage. Without a mortgage, you can't build a building.

But that's just one of the things the industry is facing and that didnt' start with President Nixon's announcement, it started six, eight, ten months ago. Most of the people in the energy industry were well aware of the problems they faced.

So since this is a preliminary draft, and since we're going to be talking about it in a real life framework and Jim and I think you have probably got some information on that to which would be very helpful as far as input-someone ought to take a real hard look at the plans.

There are, for example, no major office buildings in thw works that have been apprived, right now. There are five that are at various stages of completion. They are probably in the third, forth or fifth year of their six year cycle. But there are no major institutional or speculative office buildings which are in the "pre-going into the ground stage" in Boston. Then-as I say- there's a long cycle involved in that. Now there may be some that you all are aware of that the industry is not and if that is so then the figures would stand, but there is a significant devergence between what the industry beleives is going on and what the documnet says is so. If we're going to start with this document as part of our analysis of work and study, I think Hank we ought to try and get some others than myself into it for various reasons.

Hank Emerson: Would you suggest other entrepreneur types or someone from the Boston real estate board?

Dunn Gifford: Well anybody from the real estate board, a staff individual or the chairman which is a rotating job. Jim Kelso's close to this, he has some ideas about it. It;s hard to pick out anybody other than the entrepreneurs in business because the other builders and buildings are institutions and there aren't any left to build and new buildings.

Jim Kelso: O can think of two or three like Dan Rose for example who might be very delighted to participate. I think that people like Dan could add a great deal.

I would echo what Dunn says. I can't really buy all the office space or even the retail space, Alex, that you have projected.

Hank Emerson: Well I think those suggestions are very well taken and I will follow it up. It's probably the most significant suggestion we have today. And this is exactly what we're about. Last year we came down off of the M.I.T. mountain top and now we're down to the B.R.A. research mountain top and I want to get down to where the action really is, and still take advantage of the knowlege we hope is being generating up in those research areas.

Jerry Bush: Base Closings-I think we also must have a feeling much earlier about the base closing business. The Charlestown navy base and its counsi in south Boston, the south Boston naval annex and army base buildings represent between 7 and 8 million square feet of buildings in place. They represent some 221 acres of land and 131 acres of water. As a comparison, the Pru Center is 3 1/2 million square feet of space and 30 acres of land. The government center is 6.5 million square feet of space, 60.5 acrea of land. We're talking, 5 to 6 times the size of government center; a project which has been 15 years in the evolution and in which we all take a certain legitmate pride. Recent emergence of this issue has a real danger of being minimized in terms of an opportunity which is available to us which must be maximinized for the economic health of the entire region and certainly the entire city. I think it ought to go up front in our discussions because its now a condition which we didn't know about until April 73, when Elliot Richardson announced that the bases were being clsoed.

Hank Emerson: Your thought is that we do this before we take up transportation and housing because of the time frame.

Jerry Bush: I sense that it is an opportunity which is available to the community for a gargantian disaster. Or its the opportunity for tremondous impact on the future of the city. It's very clearly realted to housing, very clearly related to transportation, very clearly related to the restraints we're going to put on growth on the center city. 5,600 people worked there on April 17. There will be zero next May. Now are we going to be allowed to build 5,000 jobs, 10,000 jobs or are we going to go back to the 50,000 that were there in the middle of the second world war? It seems clear that 50,000 could not be tolorable to absorb given the transportation efforts so, in effect that facitity could pass all the other dynamics in the system, because its that large. I sense that the community is not aware of the potential impact of that single desicion.

Hank Emerson: Do you think of any other types of people other than what we've got here any maybe bring in more real estate people who should be involved in our consideration list?

Gerry Bush: I would encourage the addition of real estate people who have certain

perspectives. I think we should have kind of a heterogenour group of finance and commerical people as well. I would like to see a stronger imput of those who are experienced and committed to its use. It is first and foremost a piece of research.

Hank Emerson: I don't know how you take that suggestion Alex.

Alex Gans: Very find, I think that both are good suggestions. I think we would want to talk about the downtown plan first because that deals with the whole city economy and then perhaps we could schedule the plans for the reuse of the naval base for the following session.

I also second the idea of bringing more of the real estate industry I would like to suggest particually we try to get John Rayn of Ryan and Eliot, Both because he was involved in real estate development but also because of the very fine survey he conducts.

Hank Emerson: Well, let's see, we are shceduled for a meeting on the 19th of November and then on the 13 th of December. Would it be time enough would you think if we geared up to this naval base discussion of December 13? How do you feel about it Alex?

Gerry Bush: My schedule calls for me to be in San Francisco in the base closings in the 13th. They're loosing 500 acres.

Hank Emerson: Steering Committee-I think we're going to have to develop a small steering committee to take some action between the meetings to assume the responsibility for steering this thing. Any other comments, we've got two very specific suggestions that take this program closer to the scene of the action, and both of them are probably a little worse to Lou. Every time we spped up the time frame that gets down to the crisis stage then it is kind of counter-productive in terms of long range planning. We have to kind of keep one foot on the side of the long range effort here and still llok at some of these very short term immediate interests.

Jim Kelso: Suburban Impact-I might suggest we enlarge the scope of this project becuase it's huge I'm remained that since-no man is an island either is the city of Boston and whatever we do certainly will have an impact on the surrounding towns the abutting towns, what happens in those communities is going to effect Boston and I presume this is going to be included in our discussions.

Hank Emerson: Yes, but first of all, we're just kind of coming down to deal with the core city but it does include the suburbs.

Jim Kelso: I know we had to focus on Boston.

Bob Saltonstall: I happen to be here today representing the private foundations. I think it must be obvious to everyone we have considerable special interest in the whole neighborhood planning effort and those of us who try to deal with these questions after we go down the line a little way realize how many blank spots we have becuase of our background and the places we live and so on. And I'm just wondering after we hear something about neighborhood planning, whether there will ne any opportunity for us to consider bouncing these thoughts, assumptions and plans off the people who live in some of these neighborhoods and thereby improving the reliability of the things we've been talking about.

Alex Gans: I could comment on that. We had intended to invite Kirk O'Donnell-who is head of the Mayor's office of public service and runs the Little City Hall organization. He is in very close touch with the neighborhood conditions and trends and patterns-to participate in that session and perhaps bring one or two of the deputies who work in the neighborhoods with him so that we could get essentially the neighborhood view of problems, needs and planning efforts.

Hank Emerson: This would be a very good start I think and some of us who concern ourselves with this may mave to assume a devil's advocate role now and then to expose certain things which I can see partically someone in east Boston or Roxbury might feel about the strategy of improving urban services in Hyde Park or places like that.

David Rosenbloom: I might add that similar seminars are being planned for neighborhood groups. B.R.A. planners have,in fact, been meeting rather regularly at the little city halls and with the neighborhoods association leaders for the development of both the information and the goals in each of the neighborhood plans

Hank Emerson: I think there's going to be a challenge to keep the scope of this down to a point where it's managable and grows slowly and with some degree of certainty as opposed to just going in all directions at once. There are certainly three very particular things that are in terms of within the framework of what we've done so far. The expansion of our group to get a different point of view on real estate development so that we might test that point of view against the B.R.A.'s point of view and M.I.T. test in any way that they have. That seems like an immediate thing. The military base thing is certainly an opportunity that maybe we can deal with, maybe we can't. I think we'll have to try that.

The neighborhood plan sounds as though it's getting farther down the road of defusing our effort, I think it's a good suggestion, Bob and it also sounds pretty comprehensive and we'll have to talk about it alittle bit.

I think that our discussion demonstrates we're going to have to get a very small steering group set up so we can talk about some of these issues outside of the meeting of this size and just hash it out.

John Gould: Quick thought comes to my mind, M.I.T. can certainly speak for itself but in originally devising its urban dynamics concept M.I.T. very carefully brought neighborhood group reaction into its thought process. It might give some indication of how best to get the feed back from the other side for this.

Lou Alfeld: I was not involved in the original formulation of the urban dynamics model that was published in the Forrester's book. However I've been very intimatly involved with the refinment as of the Lowell model. (The one that was actually used in that report that I've sent out). And that indeed worked with people in Lowell we went over the model structure and made refinements. It was a group perhaps in some way less representative than the group here today in the sense that it was smaller and represented much more of the public sector than the private sector. In a sense though it was also more representative. It did have in it some of the private citzens, newspaper people for example, who were very quick to be very critical of things they felt their readers would be critical of.

So I welcome as much diversity as we can get. However, we do have a limited size we can deal with. As these discussions proceed its going to be essential for those of you who are not now familar with the term urban dynamics, or what I mean

when I say urban dynamics, to do some homework to catch up with those of us that have been through the seminar series and have sent a great many hours studying some of the concepts. Until you get an idea of what's going on you may feel that some of the discussion is passing you by, but I don't really think that's going to be a serious problem.

We do plan on having a special seminar or meeting over the weekend or a two day period for thise of you who would like to spend an intensive period of time learning more about urban dynamics.

In between these two week sessions what we had orignially planned to do-and I still hope to-write a very short paper, to send out. Generating questions tieing in some of the responses from earliest meetings, picking at holes that are still left in the issues that we ought to be discussing just to serve as a focus point for succeeding luncheon discussions. I must strett though that the only inputs that I'll have to those memos really are the work that's already done most importantly your responses to what both ALex and I say. That's the whole purpose of taping the sessions so that all of the information that you'll be providing-things that you like and don't like about what we've done are certain to become inputs in our next go around.

Hank Emerson: It will be very easy to go in several different directions, we're going to try to keep this respectable from an academic point of view, as far as Lou is concerned, and behind Lou baking him up and reading his papers and so on and attending some of our meetings will be John Collins and Dave Forrester.

Osborne Ingram: I think the orignial purpose of the group was to involve top level executive decision makers in exposure to this. As a practical matter it's impossible. You see gathered here people who are really communicators only, we are all staff people and I've been groping for a way to expose the people you want to reach.

I enjoy sitting in, but there is a limit to what we of the chief decision makers can involve ourselves in. I just want to flash through my mind at some point when something is resolved and I had thought maybe even this first draft of the B.R.A. plan might be it but I see there's so much more revision to come along.

Maybe a way to get to these people would be to tie it in with a corporate meeting and prepare a presentation.

You're not going to get these people regularly to these meetings and I don't think you're even going to get us the same group regularly to so many different things. But it seems to me that a corporate board meeting which the people do attend, you could ask them perhaps to tag on an hour where the work of this committe, could be given in a concise presentation.

Hank Emerson: Perhpas we can get two or three chief executive officers at our dinner, if we can justify their involvement and assuming there is something worthwhile to talk about. This is a laboratory process and if we can reduce our thinking to a few pages by the end of the year, we'll be doing well.

The meeting is adjourned.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program November 29, 1973

Kevin H. White, Mayor   Robert T. Kenny, Director BRA

PLANNING FOR BOSTON'S DOWNTOWN

Hank For your information the next meeting will be on December 13 and will involve neighborhood development strategy, that will be held in the Mayor's office, City Hall. I noticed that suggestions were made last week, that we involve some more real estate representation, and John Ryan is with us on that behalf.

We also mentioned a need for a steering committee, and so far we have Dick Adams, John Gould and Bill Smith, serving. If anyone else would like to be active on a steering committee you'll be very welcome.

Our schedule calls for four dinner meetings this year, and one being two days after Christmas I assure you that's going to be rescheduled. We're going to cover the downtown plan today, Bob Kenny would you like to say a few words, and then introduce your team to cover the downtown plan - after which we'll have some response from Lou and the rest of us.

Bob Kenny I think Hank, no where in the current perspective of things in the city do we find all of the problems of planning wrapped up in one bag, in the problems we have in terms of coming out with a downtown plan. Back in the last 60's Victor Gruen was hired by the BRA and had a downtown plan that was going to cost about $40,000,000 of federal money.

We now find ourselves in the situation of revising that plan - but one of the most important problems we have is not only do we have to set the policies and objectives of the plan, but we also have to plan as to how we're going to find the resources to accomplish it. It shows we need a much closer partnership with private capital. When you're dealing with private capital and with resources you don't have complete control over there have to be a number of compromises and in this close partnership you have to nudge, direct and channel - but freedom of doing something new becomes restricted.

We've been working for a year and a half on the downtown plan. We expected it would be out last spring - now we expect it will be out sometime after the first of the year. It will be a major discussion document which will obviously require numerous changes, but it's a starting point.

For the growth objectives, transportation is a key ingredient what we do with some of the congested street networks we have and some of the difficult commuting and parking problems. Also incorporated into that plan will be the beginnings of an incentive zoning system so we can get better control over growth. There are some areas we'd like to see preserved, there are other areas in the future that are growth oriented.

It's a very difficult job. Hank asked whether it was a plan or a forecast. When you're dealing with other peoples resources there's an ingredient of forecasting and there is also an ingredient of planning, but to say it's one or the other is difficult and would be unprofessional and irrational.

Eli Post I'm taking a caculated risk by coming before this group to talk about the downtown plan with two blank maps. I thought in the limited time available to us, we should talk more about the methodology we're using, the approach we're taking and trying to get a better sense of what the downtown plan is and what it isn't. There should be two of me, one saying the city does have control over its future, we can plan, we can decide we want growth, and there should be someone else saying that guy is crazy - you can't really control, that there are limited points of leverage, that national policy, energy crisis, oil crisis - makes it impossible for you to plan effectively, and the truth is somewhere in between.

The Projects Approach to Downtown

I'm going to make up the maps to give you a sense of the plan, this deliberately is crude so we can talk about the process more than specific projects. On the one hand

the plan consists of a collection of projects - Park Plaza; Common Garden; South Station and office development the arena is part of; 60 State Street; there's a serious project to change the whole character of Washington Street (by changing the configuration of side walks which would not quite create a pedestrian mall but would begin to approach it, and create - new pedestrian environment along all of Washington Street);and a waterfront study-- that will probably propose the major expansion of the park facilities on the water front, with a linkage to City Hall - and when plan is completed it will be a major addition to Boston's whole park system. There is Dewey Square proposal, there's talk about additional housing in the area between Tremont and Washington Street. Maybe next year there's room for new housing in Copley Square area. We think the Broad Street area should be preserved.

I could go on, and after about an hour the map would be covered in, you'd see a collection of projects in the works, proposed or seriously considered. (Just to add another we're working with state agencies now on a new road, an extension of Dorchester Avenue that would open up development possibilities in the south Boston side of the Fort P channel. Right now I see it as one of the new frontiers of downtown but its future is seriously inhibited by the lack of a direct of road connection. There's also opportunity for growth and development in the North Station area, although there are environmental problems.)

All of you are familar with Boston, you all read the Globe and are familar with Park Plaza and the arena and I feel it would take up unnecessary time to bring you up to date on each of the projects. But this is really the traditional approach to downtown planning. Do a survey of all the downtown plans that have been issued in the last fifty years in the U.S. - in essence this is what it would be. A downtown plan is a statement of what's doing; it is a collection of individual projects.

I'd like to think that we're beyond that, that we've reached a level of understandin and sophisication in our planning where we realize that cities can no longer grow and develop this way. I'm told that in the 50's the city was in serious trouble - had lost an economic base and that there was a need to establish a new base and bring in new office space - I think that the philosophy in the 50's and the 60's was to bring in new jobs ro recreate a revived economic base by construction of office buildings.

What we want to try and do now is not only expand the economy, provide jobs, increase taxes, but also to deal more rationally with the sum of the environmental implications of all this rebuilding. When you look at projects here and there you don't deal with the great consequences of what's happening. To what extent do the projections of office space - Park Plaza and South Station - effect the transportation system? The air quality? It's questions like this we want to get into.

The approach we're taking is to divide the downtown in sub districts and formulate initial goals and objectives through those sub districts. For example, take an area between Port Street down Tremont and up Washington and call it the Tremont Area. This is an area where we would like to continue the street level retail activity and also promote new housing developments. We think there's a place for it as Tremont on the Common has shown. Given the demand for housing downtown this might be an ideal way of providing new housing and strengthening the retail base.

We think the financial district ought to continue to grow as an office development area. There's room for retail growth in the area called Bedford west centering around The Raymond's parcel that the BRA owns. There is also room for residential growth around Copley Square.

We definitely don't want to encourage development in the Broad Street area, we want to try and lock in the existing building in order to maintain the historic area. We don't want to eocourage high rise development in the north end and there are parts of the leather district where we want to try and keep some of the older buildings. These would be called conservation areas. We would either keep the zoning or lower it and actively discourage any highrise.

You've all seen Alex's projections on growth in Boston of retail, office and housing space. What we try to do now is allocate that growth - if there are going to be 10,000 new apartments how many in each area? What effect will that have on the

physical and environmental makeup of that sub area? If there are going to be seven million square feet of office space in Boston in the next decade and if a certain percent will be in the financial district - where is it likely to occur and what effect will it have on street life, transportation system, on air quality and the like.

It's a very difficult effort because the analytic tools simply don't exist. You can't ask anyone what the ideal city ought to be. There's no easy way of determining what appropriate density is. It's all highly subjective.

What we're trying to do now is open up the facts and present them to groups like this and others who have a legitimate interest in downtown, so collectively we can make a decision on the kind of growth we want to aim for: Given the kind of growth that might take place in the financial district; Given the kind of sites that are likely are to come up for development; what kind of height limitations - what kind of bulk limitations ought to be imposed to achieve what kind of results?: We begin to do that by assemblying a lot of the data to be presented here which gives you a sense of the kind of growth that could take place on a sub area basis.

Incentive Zoning

The vehicle we're thinking about is something called incentive zoning which has been used with a fair measure of success in San Francisco and New York. Let me say that the views I express are not necessarily those of the management, I was suprised when I saw how zoning and development worked in Boston. In New York, just because of the scale of development, for the most part zoning is done on a wholesale basis. You want to put up an office building. You check the zoning. If it complies, it gets done, you don't have to fool around with the architects, the BRA or the other bureaucrats around City Hall. It's a fairly straightforward process - not without problems but its highly routinzed, and it has to be in order for the city to operate.

I was suprised that in Boston every building is negotiated. If you look at the zoning code, it says there is a maximum FIR of 10. (That is essentially that on no lot can you have a building whose floor space exceed ten times the land area.) There is no single major building that's gone up in Boston over the last several years that complies with that. Most are 14-15. There's one at 25. There is little relationship between the zoning ordinance and the actual pattern of development. One could say that as a pratical matter the zoning ordinance is inoperative.

One would like to believe that zoning is a major vehicle for controlling land use and scale of development. So to the extent that zoning is inoperative it raises a serious question about the kind of mechanisms the city has at its disposal for determining a scale of development. What we propose - not as something we submit to the zoning commission for approval but to take a document out to groups like this in the business, development, and real estate communities in Boston for discussion - is a system whereby any increase in FIR beyond that contained in the zoning ordinance would have to be related to a trade off. You would have to show the increase in bulk was related to meeting environmental needs of that area.

One simple example is that if somebody owns a site next to a subway station and they agree to provide a direct connection between that site and the station, thereby lessening the amont of pedestrian conjestion, they ought to be able to build a higher building because that connection facilitates a higher builidng. Along Tremont Street there are a lot of internal pedestian paths. Some of the buildings you can walk right through and suddenly you come up against a brick wall snd you've got to go back on the street again. We'd like to create an internal pedestrian circulation system there. To the extent that if somebody owns a site and they will provide that link, they ought to be able to build a higher building or a larger building or do something that's not ordinarly permitted.

We also want to deal with the question of doing business with city of Boston. I personally lean toward a system which is more automatic and involves less discretion, I think the development community would appreciate a greater degree of certainty in its dealings with the city. They would like to know exactly what they can do, and return

for knowing what it can do it might settle for a lower scale development.

On the other hand this initiative really is being debated within the BRA. You can't spell out in an ordinance exactly the kind of development you want. You need to retain some descretion. A building across the street from a historic monument or cemetary may make a dramatic effect if its twisted three degrees more, you can't write that into an ordinance, it can't be that rigid.

The real question is how do you set something in motion, to encourage people to do business in Boston but at the same time leave the planning body and other concerned city agencies with enough descretion so that you can deal with these unique aspects of a site. The real question about growth and the one that's difficult to handle is how do you really decide what level of growth is appropriate in an area.

If Dun Gifford will forgive me I'll talk about 60 State Street, we're actively working on that. Cabot Cabot & Forbes had commissioned Knapp Associates to do an environmental impact statement on the projects. Those environmental impact statements are funny things, no one knows quite what they are or what to do with them. There peopl on one side who think its just another obstacle that has to be overcome and there are those on the other side of the coin who think that it will usher in a new world and dramatically change the kinds of developments that will occur. What the environmental impact statement did on 60 State Street was to systematically raise all of the relevent issues, nothing more, nothing less. We learned that there were serious wind problems which we could resolve through change in design. We also learned that it would eat up all the excess transportation capacity at that location. You can start dealing with that issue in terms of individual building it's still complicated but its manageabl Here is a building on this site. It will draw X thousand people. They require so many cars. You can begin to look at an individual building in a much broader way than has previously been possible. It's very funny when you do an impact statement, you find out that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

I remember when we made a presentation on the Park Plaza environmental statement to a community group. I went through an elaborate discussion of wind and shadow, and transportation and air quality, each and every major impact. At the end I said are there any questions, somebody said we agree you've shown there are no serious impacts, but we still don't like high rise buildings.

The problem with environmental impact is that it can break something down into discrete parts, but there's still that unknown almost political issue "Do you want it or don't you want it"? You can't look at it scientifically. Anyway we have a great deal of trouble taking a single building and analyzing its implications. The process of looking at several buildings in a large area is much more difficult. What we're trying to do now is put that in appropriate form so we can take it out to groups like this and begin a very active serious discussion on the kind of development we want to occur in downtown.

A City State Model?

Bill Smith A question was asked of me and I didn't have the answer. Are we headed for a Italitan or Greek city state through an urban dynamics approach where we do everything for the city to try to get the employment within the city? Working within the city there's almost implied irrelevance to have the suburbs participate. If that's true (I guess you'll say it isn't) you've got a bigger system. this is one system working within another system. We spent almost all of our time talking about what's going on in Boston or in Lowell and very little in relating the outside to what might be called the city's picture.

Lou Alfeld Urban Dynamics per se does not deal with any specific city nor preclude dealing with larger metropolitan or national or even world situtations. What Urban Dynamics does do is it allows you to look at any one sub portion of the system to see how its reacting internally. Certainly we all are interested in having the city of Boston be as healthy and stable as possible in the future as as well as every suburban community and the whole metropolitan area and state of Massachusetts. We recognize

there are great inter-dependencies between and local area and the entire outside environment (extending to the Mid-East these days)

One of the objectives perhaps of local decision making and local government is to try to plan and develop goals, to for see possible contingencies in the future such that forces beyond the control of an immediate local decision, do not seriously upset the lives of the people. For example President Nixon has annoucned project independence - making this country energy independent so this country's quality of life could not be disturbed by events we have no control over.

To the extent that the future of the city or the future of any local government can be seriously disrupted by events that are beyond control of that government is a good idea is to at least look ahead see what those events might be and take that into your present planning to make yourself less vunerable to events you know will happen sometime in the future.

So people have drawn a parallel between the direction of specialization of the city and given the example of New York City which is totally dependent for a labor force that lives outside the immediate city. Workers are totally dependent on a lot of transportation and dependent to a great extent on outside subsidies to support a population that is not supported by local jobs. If for any reason the transportation is disrupted or the outside subsidies becomeunavailableeither because the state and federal governments can no longer raise taxes to support a large welfare load or unemployment beyond a critical limit, the city itself can become very vulnerable Looking ahead to Boston's future we certainly don't preclude working with outside communities, we're only interested in looking at where those links are the most sensitive to local decisions that are being made here and how. We might plan what kind of links we want to establish with the outside.

The Need for Certainty

Dun Gifford It seems to me the most important word that Eli used was certainty. I would think the development community,speaking as a member of it, would support any effort which increases the likelihood of certainty by a given action. Watching the development of the color lines and areas on the chart [in the presentation] makes it perfectly apparent that the achievement of that is dependent upon close cooperation between the private development industry and the public officials at all different levels of government. And it certainly is the key word, there's going to be a lot happier climate and a lot more accomplished if there is some increasing degree of certainly about theachievabilityof the plan.

We heard the city talk about the incentive zoning that we would welcome and like to see, but here's the question I'd like to see answered: How does Urban Dynamics relate to this thing of increasing the degree of certainty so that three, five, eight years from now somebody doesn't say :"Oh we made a terrible mistake we're going to change everything around again".

Lou Alfeld The question you ask is one that I suppose everyone is interested in. I'm not sure there is anyway to increase certainty, that you know for sure eight years from now someone else isn't going to come into power or some other group may decide to change plans around. World or national events may trigger some unforseen things. I don't know that I can actually improve certainty, be we can certainly use Urban Dynamics to improve the ability of planning and of the urban system to withstand the impact of uncertain event in the future. In that case it does improve the certainty of the stability. Perhaps I have mentioned at the end of that current paper I wrote that one real trade-off that faces the city is trading-off of the certaity of short term economic gains knowing that we can get a particular office building trading that off for a perhaps more stable future, in other words reducing some of the uncertainty of thevulnerability of a city to outside forces

The Washington Street Mall and Urban Dynamics

Dun Gifford There's been talk about making Washington Street more amenable for pedestrians. Every five years there's a new phrase aboutpedestrians malls. Everytime the BRA does the studies and is proposed for some reason it falls apart - whether it's rejection of the retail merchants, or whether transportation - the truckers say they can't get the goods to the stores and the stores can't open - something always happens to make it not work. Now how specifically can the urban dynamics technique of trying to look ahead help the BRA planners in acheving in what they see as a desirable goal or at least telling the BRA planners it can never be achieved and here are the reasons why, so forget it, so that a whole lot of expectations don't get raised.

This is the problem, if urban dynamics can be a useful tool in this dilemma then I think a lot of us can be interested in committing a lot of our resources to the Urban Dynamics technique. The question precisely is what can Urban dynamics do to help the BRA with the pedestrian mall to say: yes but these are the hurdles you've got to overcome, or forget it it will never happen.

Lou Alfeld To be specific on that particular question, Eli Post raised the issues that there are many things tied together with an office building or pedestrian mall: traffic; transportation; and congestion of other space; who's going to shop there; where they come from; how many stores you're going to have; who you'll appeal to. Those issues are all tied together. Urban Dynamics can take the linkages, those interactions between number of shoppers and the number of parking spaces needed and the amount of street space. We can put those together into a model the assumptions we have about the interactions and to discover whether or not those assumptions lead to an outcome that is at allfeasable for the city.

Now obviously the Washington Street pedistrian development is dependent on Park Plaza or other office building construction. It's dependent on the property tax rate in the city over the nest ten years - whether merchants can afford to be there. It's dependent on employment which in turn is a function of the education system in the city; how many people in the city have jobs and don't have jobs; whether the people in the city have the money to spend at those stores. Those issues keep the concentric circle of issues getting wider and wider. As you raise more questions, Urban Dynamics is a method for linking together thesemany complexities of the system into a model that can allow you to find out what the real trade-offs are in the system. If you build more retail space what is the trade-off for more increased congestion downtown, and does that then preclude putting up another office building sometime because the transportation system is already overloaded by shoppers, would you have shoppers using the subway, or people working in buildings? Do you have to put in a new transportation system? How much upgrading is required of it?

These are the kinds of issues urban dynamics can help you answer, but until the issues are defined in terms of what you want answers to, and until the city as a system is defined in terms of what you people see as the major interactions those models can't be built. We have now some preliminary models some rought ones., I've given you a paper based on a mental model that raises some interactions and shows possible conclusions.

I see the role of urban dynamics in this as listening to what's going on trying to organize some of the ideas that are brought out prehaps using simple models, perhaps just doing it verbally. That is also a function of how many people we have working on this project and the funding. I see the first round - at least these first few months - of meetings - as defining the issues. Is growth really what you want? Do you really want another ten office buildings downtown? What character of the city do you want? Then we can begin to link these things together. By the way Dun, I would say that your question ought to be answered by everyone else at the table as well as myself.

Jim Kelso Lou, will you ever have enough inputs to give an answer? Aren't the questions unending?

Alex Ganz Could I take a crack at that question as well as the previous one? I would just like to say that one of the reasons we're interested in Urban Dynamics

is precisely for the reasons that Lou spelled out. We see in it a valuable technique for looking at the whole city and the interrelationship of all of the planning and development issues. In my mind the contribution that Urban Dynamics has made is that it provides a conceptional framework for linking together population, jobs, housing and all of the interrelated issues. We're very interested in having this kind of a look at our planning process, precisely to make sure that we can see ahead to some of the direct and indirect and secondary effects of planning decisions and to accomadate those in the planning process.

Is This Approach Radical Enough?

Dep. Mayor Sullivan Is this really going to work, Lou, from your point of view? I mean are we going to be able to take the pedestrian mall for example and run it through something called "urban dynamics" and come up with an answer? Isn't Urban Dynamics in itself a radical and far reaching building of a system which seems to me would have to come first rather than having it on the side lines to react to specific proposals for development. In other words is this relationship that we're trying to develop here in a kind of casual way between Urban Dynamics and city planning going to work or doesn't it take a more radical approach?

Lou Alfeld Urban Dynamics is not a panacea for all of the city's problems nor will it answer all of your problems. The issue that's really before us is: will using Urban Dynamics result in something better that you'd otherwise get. There is no perfect model and there are no perfect answers over at M.I.T. all we can do is offer what I believe to be some very useful insights into the interactions that go on in a city, help raise some useful questions perhaps for planning both about goals the direction and for long consequences of particular actions and help the planners, the people making decisions see the city as a system. Urban Dynamics is just beginning, its a brand new field of analysis that was first devolped four years ago and we haven't spent that much time or money on it since,compared to say what's going into transportation planning or any of the other fields that have been around much longer. This represents a radical and innovative effort. We can help raise questions about its feasability, I'm not sure that we'll ever be able to say to Urban Dynamics and Lou Alfeld says this is going to work and this isn't going to work. We've come up with issues like, well if you want to do it this way the trade-off is going to be massive improvement in transportation system, further isolation of the people in Dorchester from the jobs in Boston, more money needs to be pumped into the education system, and taxes might go up. These are not couched in terms of absolute conclusions but in terms of logic as to why these things might happen, and it's up to you people around the table then to go through that mental logic yourself and find out whether or not it makes sense.

The paper that I've written tries to lay out some of the logic rather briefly as to some of the things that might be occuring, and only to stimulate further discussion and further thought to find out whether that logic is reasonable. That logic comes from Urban Dynamics not from a particular model but from a way of viewing the city as a system.

Chip The place where we really got started in Lowell and I think the thing that made the initial impact on people was a point that was raised about goals in the city, and I think that's where you have to begin, and where some of the advantages of Urban Dynamics become most apparent. It's very clear to us and I think it's becoming clear to people in Lowell that there are many more priorities in the city than can ever be achieved simultaneously. You talk to ten different administrators or ten different groups within a city and you get ten different number one priorities about what they want. It can be a downtown pedestrian mall, more downtown parking, lower unemployment, there are a whole spectrum of problems depending on who you talk to.

Where Urban Dynamics can make its earliest impact for a city is to allow you to take one step back from looking at each of those individual problems and ask yourself how do they relate to each other, Did that particular offensive have in any way the

possibility of conflicting with the goals of those people who want to see unemployment reduced? It was clear to us that increasing housing supply (viewed against a trend of decreasing total employment in the city a 3% reduction in jobs over that same period in time) was very clearly contributing to more people than there were jobs - or at least the balance was increasingly less favorable.

Now to the extent that a pedestrian mall would contribute to more people or more jobs is an issue the group here can begin to talk about. I'm not sure that it's direct first impact is on either one of those two segments; of the economy, but you have to figure our what are the most important priorities of the city. I think that's a large part of the reason for this group coming together. What kind of things do we want Boston to have twenty years from now. Only in that light can you begin to discuss whether a pedestrian mall is any more important than an office tower or any more important than anti-pollution controls. Many current decisions are probably very irrelevant from the standpoint of getting at those really fundamental goals whatever they might be. It's not Urban Dynamics job to try to decide what those goals should be. It's the job of the people here to state what their proporities are, Urban Dynamics can help you decide whether or not those prirorities are feasably connected, what thing to have to give up in order to achieve the benefits that the group as a whole might be able to agree on. Then with clear goals in mind, you can sit down and ask whether or not this particular decision makes any sense.

If goals are completely ambiguous and fuzzy and unclear then any decision can be justified, every decision does some good and some bad for a city. There would be no decisions being made if that weren't true. You have to look at it not against a set of utopian kinds of goals but instead clear ones, and then these more current decisions I think can be discussed fairly rationally and with real impact, even without a perfect model, but just with those goals first of all.

Bill Smith Do we have those goals, I mean do you have them in mind in your plan?

Eli Post Yes very definitely,I think the questions that Lou is raising are all very legitimate and reflect the kind of thinking that's now going on in BRA. I had that set of questions in mind as I was making my presentationalthough my background is not in ecomomics it's in planning and administration so the tone on the views are much different but clearly its that set of issues that is determining the kind of form that are our plan will take. Some are easier to handle than others, but some of the broad issues araised here to come extent are very difficult to deal with.

Bob Saltonstall One of the impressions I have gotten from listening to the presentation here was an impatience to get some feel for the time frame that you have in mind. This of course relates to the question of what comes first? What are the priorities? Not individual priorities but what is the group's top priority that you're shooting for and what do you put in the second category as nice and wish we could have it if we have the money? I think my question relates to goals and I'm wondering if you could tell us just alittle bit more with reference to what you've outlined here, what comes first in this picture?

Eli Post My first agenda item is to try to resolve the kinds of negatives that are employed in implementing the plan. I think than any plan we come up with is simply not self excuting there's no vehicle - we can't file it with the city clerk and then have someone around this table consulted anytime he or she wants to do something. I'm primarly concerned with changing the way the city does business and particularly in terms of zoning and development policy - we've got to change the mechanism so that we can start obtaining the kind of development that we think is appropriate.

In terms of which project goes where - I think we ought to make that a subject of a separate meeting after the first of the year when those maps will be filled out and show real projects and we can discuss the timing of office development and housing.

John Ryan I think your plans are quite realistic, very salable to the development community. One of your difficulities may be your preoccupation with Park Plaza. Perhaps even 60 State Street hasn't been explained enough to the community, but I would suggest you're going to get a very strong response from the development; that you've got a lot to sell and maybe you've been a little slow in getting that out to

the private sector but I think this plan will be quite well received quite workable.

One misconception I think is on the certainty of this - all of these development plans are forty year commitments. I think that had a lot to do with building confidence in the city - I know Dun your company wouldn't invest in the city until there was this sort of security of government center plans, water front plans and to me that gives us a pretty good time frame to be sure of what happens around an environment. In city building and planning forty years is not that great a period I agree but at least it gives a base for planning and development and the security of the financial institutions that know if they place their mortage money they are getting reinforced by happenings around them.

Eli Post I understand one of the questions raised at the last meeting was the degree of certainty surrounding the office space projections and Alex prepared some charts. I don't want to go into detail but this shows there were the 6,000,000 square feet in '70-73. These are the projections underway, either in construction or about to start. There is a degree of uncertainty surrounding most ot the projects for'76-82. In some cases the degree of certainty is nominal and in some cases its serious. When you look at the projections that we made, there is some question about these coming about. The office space projection is critical because the projections on retial growth and on housing demand are directly related to those projections.

Education in Boston and Office Development

Lou Alfeld The assumption that has been behind the presentations and the questions so far is that everyone agrees that you really want that office space that the development community is going to be satifisied with this development and that with development we're going to have a better future. I know from talking to most of you that you're all concerned with the quality of education in Boston - the fact that the people that now live in Boston do not qualify for the kinds of jobs that are being created in Boston and you're concerned with the growing amount of commuting and conjestion in the city. The BRA is concerned with the fact that two out of every three new jobs in Boston seem to be going to commuters. Will further office construction further widen the gap between the people who work in Boston and the people who live in Boston as it has done in New York City? Eli Post would be good to respond to the New York experience over the last fifteen years. From the statistical viewpoint there has been a rise in taxes, and welfare and the largely disenfranchised section of the urban population in the city, does not have access to the kinds of the jobs that the city offers. I don't know how this plan is different that what New York went through fifteen years ago.

Comparison with New York

Eli Post I don't think its safe to say that at this point BRA is taking the simple posture that we want to achieve as much office development as we can at any cost. I think that was the philosophy of the cities in the 50's and its changed. We are much more concerned about land planning environmental consequenses. For some of the issues you've dealing with I don't have an answer. It is a serious question in terms of the city's capital ratio of jobs. Alex is more an authority on that than I am, and can address himself to it. In New York I worked for the private side not the planning commission and it never addressed itself to these issues. The city's planning was traditionally on a piecemeal effort, planning was more an effort to get projects and to deal with issues on a case basis, I very rarely recall a discussion where we really tried to understand the broader consequenses of a particular program.

I think the classic case is the whole public housing program. There was a desperate need for housing in New York. New York housing is as sharp a political issue as the tax rate is in Boston. The city has done its dammest to build as much low rent housing as possible. As Lou points out its been sort of a self fulling prophecy to the extent that its mounted a successful program, its drawn more poor people to the city, encouraged them to remain and expanded a meed for additional housing.

Politically it was probably the only course that was available to the city and I think even if it had the opportunity to sit back and decide whether it wanted to embark on that kind of program, I'm not sure it would have done anything differently.

But even now, I know for a fact New York doesn't have a policy on office development it's made every effort to try and encourage additional development in Manhattan without really any serious concern on how that development relates to the many jobs the city will capture, how it affects the transportation system. It is a carry over of the philosophy that prevailed in this town several years ago. To the best of my knowledge nothing approaching the kind of view toward planning that Urban Dynamics suggests exists there. There are cases I could site where they tried to relate an effort in one area in consequences in another, but those are the exceptions rather than the rule.

John Ryan I think it's a healthy problem to have the jobs. I'd rather have to solve that problem than Lowell's problem without the jobs. To me a healthy economy can work. I think these office buildings have been a great thing for the city, it's going to make housing possible in the city; middle and high income housing.

Eli Post We operate on the assumption that additional growth and expansion is necessary for the city's future and to the extent that we've made these projections on retail space and particularly on housing, they are directly related to the growth in job opportunities.

Dep. Mayor Sullivan Housing is the only way you're going to save Jordan's and Filene's have to push that middle and higher income back in.

Lou Alfeld I think retail is depending more and more on the so called captive market, that results from the housing and the office employmnet. I don't know any easy answer to the question of how you can create new jobs in downtown that will go th residents of the city.

Hank Emerson Lou, do you have an updated valid model of the urban system which is Boston?

Lou Alfeld We have a model that's applicable to Boston: the same one we developed for Lowell. We have refined the model that was done under a year and a half HUD grant of $210,000 to refine and eleborate the Urban Dynamics model. The original one was published four years ago.

Dep. Mayor Sullivan Can you plug in specific things and get out answers to what the ultimate ramifications are going to be?

Lou Alfeld For some things yes. The paper I circulated two weeks ago shows what we were able to do for Lowell.

Hank Emerson I've been intrigued with Forrester's Urban Dynamics and think he may have some of the answers to the important questions which have lead us astray for generations. I'm just wondering whether or not the interlationship between Forrester's Urban Dynamics and the BRA can be a casual thing, or does it have to be a kind of radical reworking and reanalysis of everything we propose to do. Do you think you're going to be able to do that?

Lou Alfeld That is an unanswered question yet, exactly what kind of relationship will develop between the three parties representated is something we're evolving.

Hank Emerson I think that's a good question to leave with us at this point. I think John Ryan's comment was good, giving Eli encouragement in terms of getting some of his thoughts and philosophy and plans exposed to the community.

Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee, Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program December 13, 1973

PLANNING FOR BOSTON'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Hank Emerson: The next meeting will be January 10 in which we're going to discuss the city's housing program. Without any further comments, I'm going to just turn the meeting over to Alex, who will introduce the team, who will give us the city's presentation on Neighborhood Development strategy and then we'll allow time for Lew Alfeld with MIT's comments and then comments and questions from the rest of you.

Alex Ganz: Today we're going to deal with Boston's neighborhoods; the planning and developing strategy that is underway as well as what is actually happening in the neighborhoods. In the 60's Boston focused on redevelopment of certain inner-city and older neighborhoods. Since then, a lot has happened. A lot of favorable factors of strength, including growth in jobs, growth in income, reversal of population decline, plus an expanded city committment in terms of public investment and a private sector committment. All of this makes possible a newer effort and a broader effort toward redevelopment, planning for all of the city neighborhoods and today we want to tell you a little about it. I would like to introduce the 3 persons who will make some remarks to you about this question: Carla Okigwe, planning officer, Judith Weirs, planning officer and Kirk O'Donnell of the Mayor's Office of Public Services (the Mayor's Little City Hall Program) who will tell you a little about what's actually happening in the neighborhoods. I would just like to mention that we also have here today Bob Walsh from the BRA Community Development Department. Essentially he's involved with implementing in part some of the aspects of the planning and developing strategy that Carla and Judy will tell you about:

Carla Okigwe:

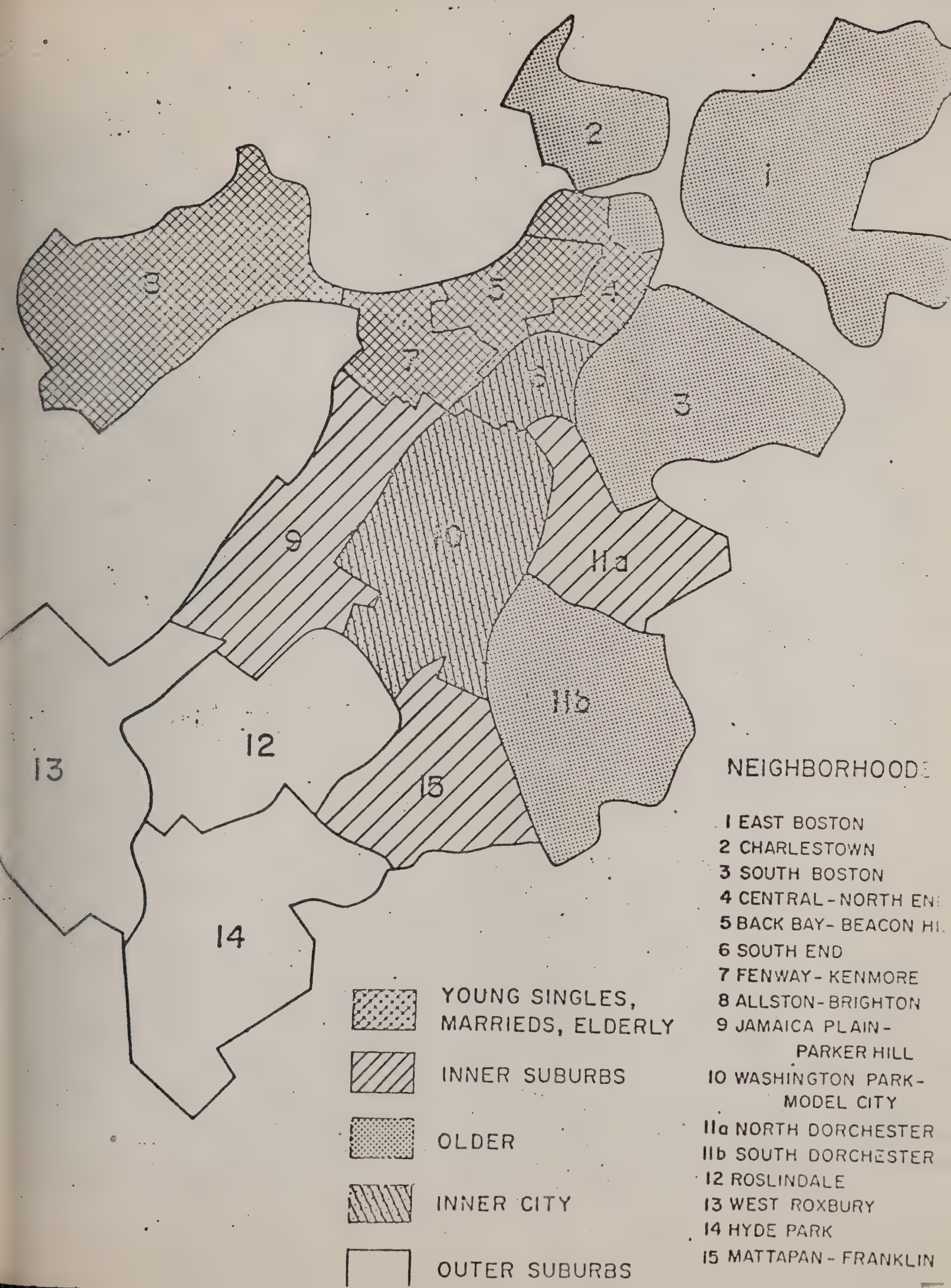
INTRODUCTION

Judy Weirs & I have been working in the BRA Planning Dept. for about the last year now and we've been involved in a city-wide level, but looking at neighborhoods in a comparative kind of way. We've been interested occasionally to go into our library and find past things such as the Master Plan for 1950 and we find they're the same problems as we have now. Things have changed though.

One of the troubles that Boston was having during the 60's was the decline in population and a troublesome economy. Fortunately, Boston did choose to focus its efforts in the area of creating jobs and in re-vitalizing the downtown area and the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. Map # 1 illustrates the 1960's in this part of Boston. Now, we still have a major commitment to fulfill to our neighborhoods in terms of making them more livable and that's what is essentially the subject of today's session. In the 1960's the outlying areas were referred to as general improvement areas and now we are talking about not quite such an amorphous program. We're talking about conservation policies, improvement policies, and re-vitalization policies, focused on perhaps smaller areas or trying to pick up whole neighborhoods to begin the process of revitalizing and making the future appear brighter in the whole area.

For about 4 years now we have had underway a District Planning Program which is also working jointly with the Little City Hall's Program which Kirk will be talking about a little later. District Planners have a 2-level function; one is handling the day-to-day problems that come up in terms of Zoning variance requests and that kind of thing and second to work toward long-range planning efforts in the community zones; a major concern for the 1970's is developing a workable process for citizen participation in improving Boston's neighborhoods.

BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS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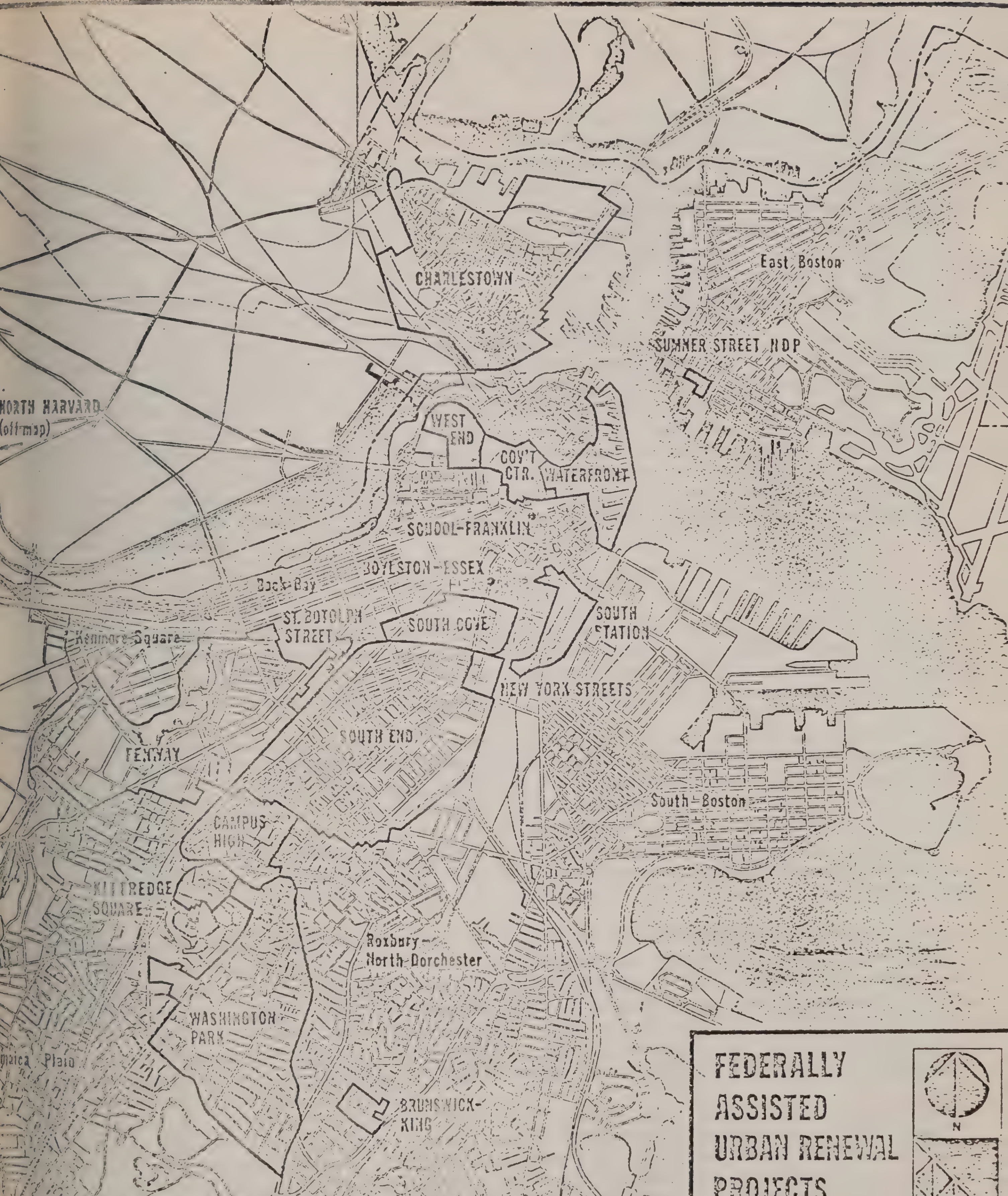
INNER SUBURBS
OLDER
INNER CITY
OUTER SUBURBS
NEIGHBORHOOD
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL-NORTH EN
5 BACK BAY- BEACON HI
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY- KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK-MODEL CITY
11a NORTH DORCHESTER
11b SOUTH DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN - FRANKLIN


CHARLESTOWN
East Boston
SUMNER STREET NDP
NORTH HARVARD
(off map)
WEST END
GOV'T CTR.
WATERFRONT
SCHOOL-FRANKLIN
BOYLSTON-ESSEX
Back Bay
ST. BOTOLPH STREET
SOUTH COVE
SOUTH STATION
Kenmore Square
NEW YORK STREETS
SOUTH END
FENWAY
South Boston
CAMPUS HIGH
KITTREDGE SQUARE
Roxbury-North Dorchester
WASHINGTON PARK
maica Plain
BRUNSWICK-KING
FEDERALLY ASSISTED URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
N

We have the city in 15 districts at the time being some areas require several little city halls in order to function properly. It might also be nice to have more than one planner as some of the districts----

In the paper that was handed out we attempted to generalize a little about the neighborhoods to give you a feel of the variety in Boston without overwhelming you with too many statistical details about our neighborhoods. We have simplified 5 types of neighborhoods, the sort of the more growing areas where we have increase in population, particularly in young families without children and professionals and single people in Allston-Brighton, The Fenway-Kenmore, Back Bay, Beacon Hill and downtown, all seem to reflect this type of growth. Then we have the older communities which have had some stable long-term population, without reflecting too much change up to now, although some of them have potential for change in the near future. Inner suburbs, which initially had been built as suburbs of Boston, but now, of course, in relation to the lower density areas out here don't have quite the suburban characteristics. The outer suburbs of West Roxbury, Roslindale and Hyde Park and then the inner city area where we have had extensive urban renewal efforts underway. Judy will be talking more particularly about all the trends that are going on in these neighborhoods.

Judy Weirs: I appreciate the opportunity to be here and particularly the incentive that it offered to pull together some of the work that we've been doing over the last couple of years. This is really the first time that we've done that. With community development revenue sharing coming within a year or two we started much more to try and piece together things to develop priorities and this is the initial stepping off in that direction.

MAJOR POPULATION CHANGES

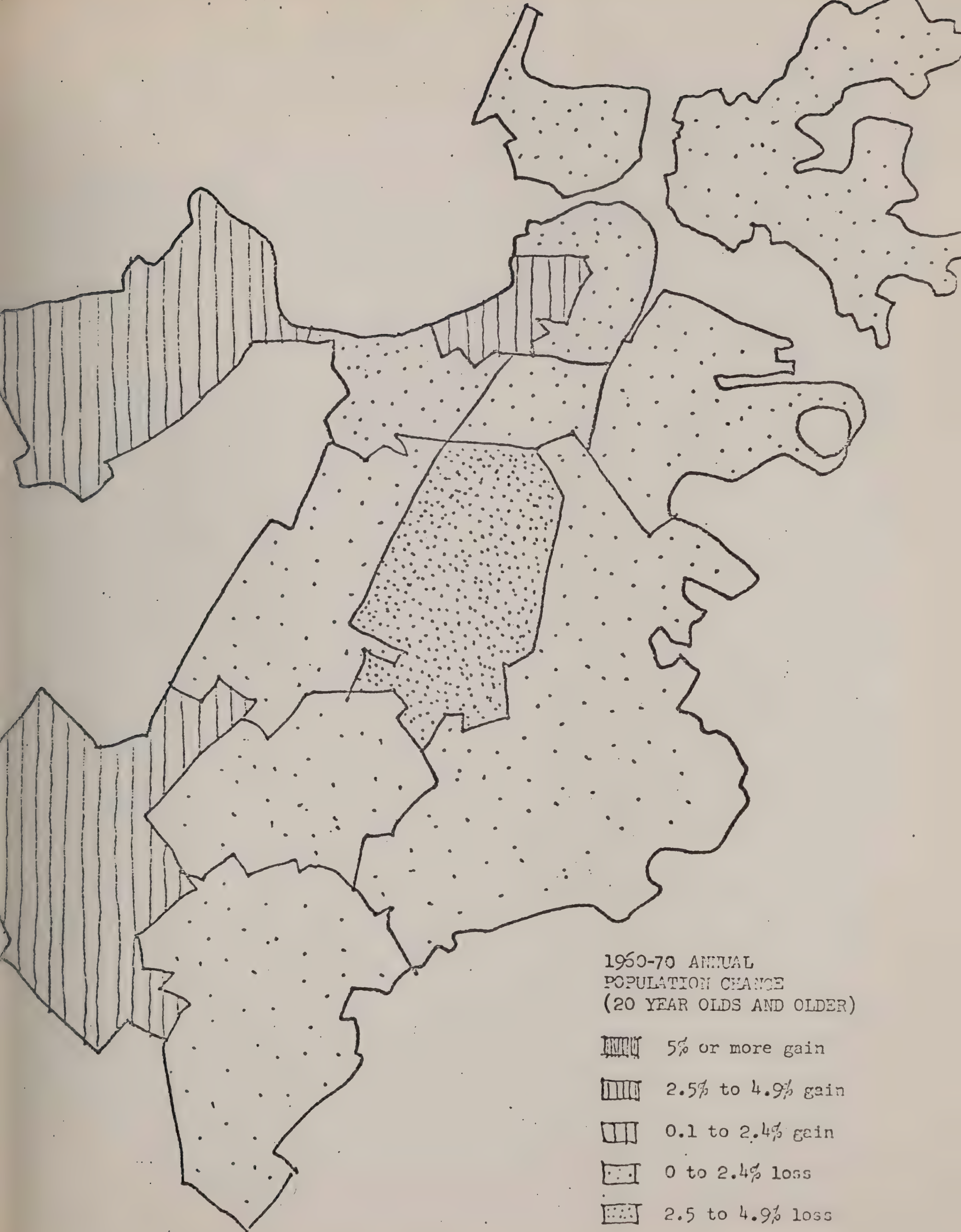
I think in trying to understand what's happening in Boston it's important to focus on some of the natural changes that are taking place. Every neighborhood goes through, as I think Lew pointed out in the paper he circulated, changes of families growing older, housing getting older and then when elderly people sell their houses, new families moving in.

That type of change is going on in neighborhoods all the time, but there are two rather distinctive population changes that have been going on in Boston. In 1960 there was a concentration of 20 to 24-year olds in the Back Bay area which has spread along Commonwealth Ave. in Allston-Brighton down into MissionHill toward the current U. Mass, not the one that just opened. That's one of the major trends. The other is the change in the location of the black population. In 1960 it was centered in the South End and Washington Park. During the 60's the black population migrated toward Franklin Field, slightly along the western edges of Dorchester and into more of the model cities area.

The increase in young adults, not only in the 20 to 24 year-olds, but in the 25 to 34 year olds accompanied the major increase in jobs in the core office buildings. The new people who moved in are very highly skilled and incomes went up markedly in this area. This change in the central part of Boston was accompanied by an almost doubling of the black population as blacks moved in from the South and in some cases, from the Carribean. At the same time almost 30% of the housing units in the South End and Washington Park model cities area were demolished either through urban renewal or through abandonment. That helped to start this migration.

Maps #2, #3 give you an idea of what has happened to population; In the 1960's, there were increases in the Back Bay in Allston-Brighton & West Roxbury. All other areas lost population. The recent police census has indicated to us that this trend has changed dramatically recently and most of Boston is now gaining population. Since 1970 we have an increase of 18,000 people in the city. It is concentrated in the core where most of the new development, or the largest portion of it, has taken place. Surprisingly, some of the more suburban areas have begun, or increased their loss in population.

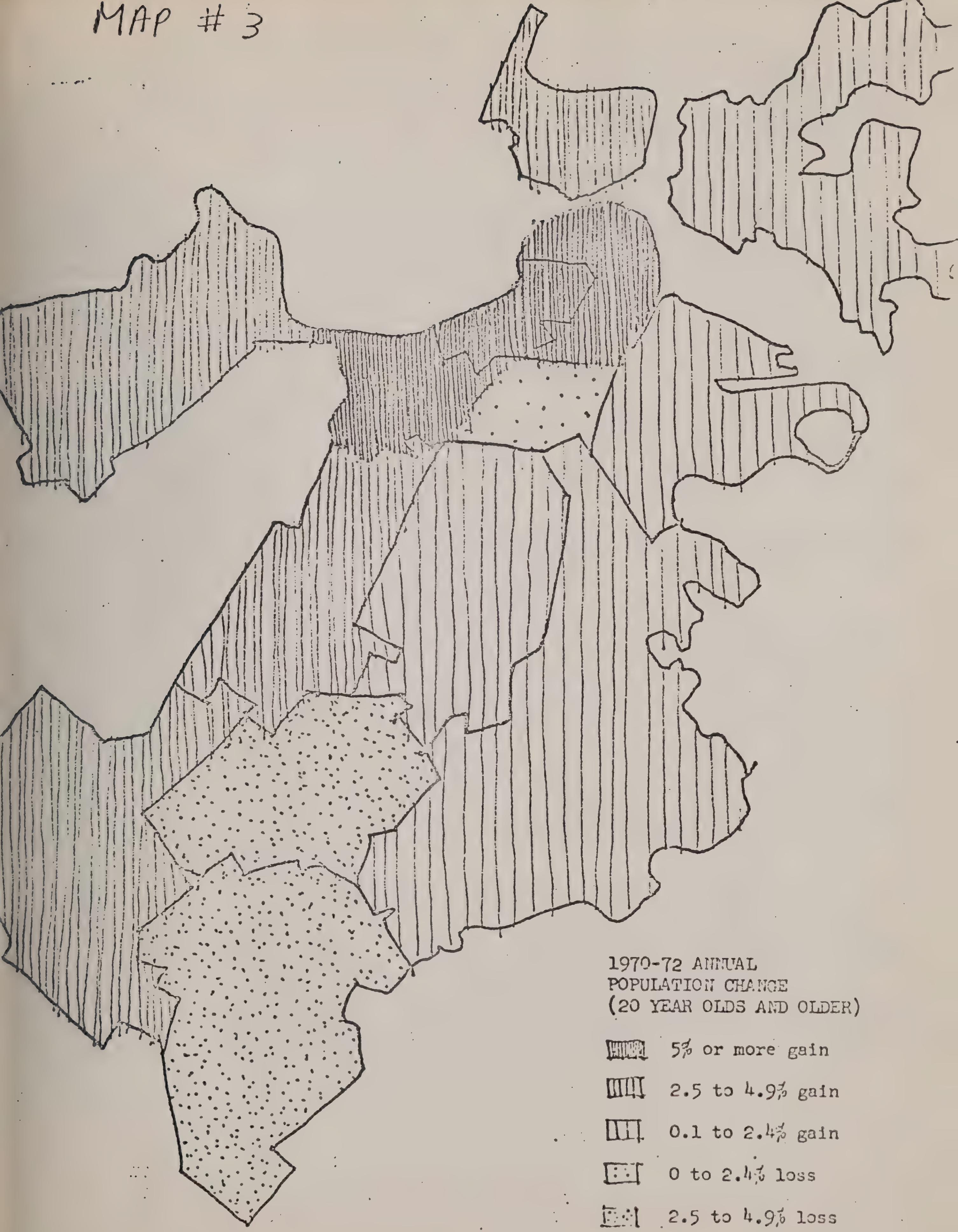
MAP #2



1960-70 ANNUAL POPULATION CHANGE (20 YEAR OLDS AND OLDER)

▥ 5% or more gain
▥ 2.5% to 4.9% gain
▥ 0.1 to 2.4% gain
▨ 0 to 2.4% loss
▨ 2.5 to 4.9% loss

MAP # 3



1970-72 ANNUAL POPULATION CHANGE (20 YEAR OLDS AND OLDER)

▥ 5% or more gain
▥ 2.5 to 4.9% gain
▥ 0.1 to 2.4% gain
⁘ 0 to 2.4% loss
⁘ 2.5 to 4.9% loss

These figures tie in with two main changes that I mentioned to you where you have more people, especially in the 25 to 34 year old age group moving into the core. They are also beginning to move into some of the other areas of the city, East Boston, South Boston and Charlestown. The black migration has had some affect and the natural just competition from the suburbs has had some affect on the suburban out migration.

THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Map # 4 tries to summarize some of the physical needs in the city. We've pulled together consideration of housing conditions and incomes (those two indicate how much subsidy might be needed to fix up) and combined that with where abandonment is happening to come up with 3 categories: conservation, improvement and the re-vitalization. Conservation means that housing is in fairly good condition, very little, if any, subsidy is needed by families, and there is very little abandonment.

Re-Vitalization means the kind of subsidy that would be needed would be pretty heavy and there is extensive abandonment and maybe extensive vacant land already. Revitalization areas are fairly small. They occur mostly along Dudley St., in model cities. There are some kind of scattered areas in other places.

On the whole, the housing and the neighborhood conditions in Boston are very good and next to other central cities they're excellent. Over half of the housing in Boston needs less than $1,000.00 to bring it up to housing code standards.

Map # 4 also notes the urban renewal areas and commercial centers which are a focus of neighborhoods and which could use improvement.

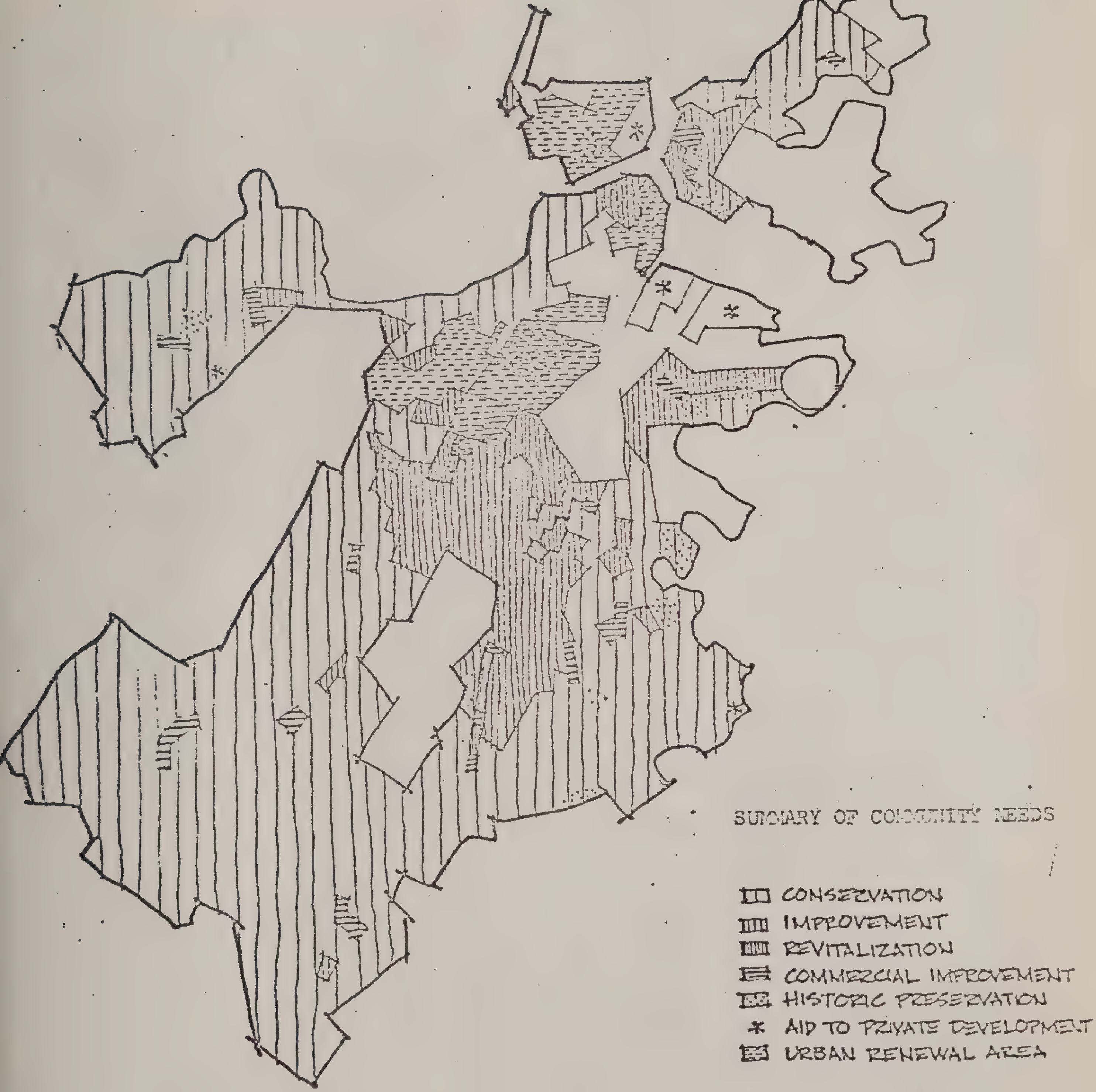
When we start to talk about what to do about improving housing, the important things to realize are the high level of home ownership in the city. In most of the city over 75% of the 1 to 4 unit structures are resident-owned. In most of the South End or downtown areas where you have larger apartment buildings this declines sharply.

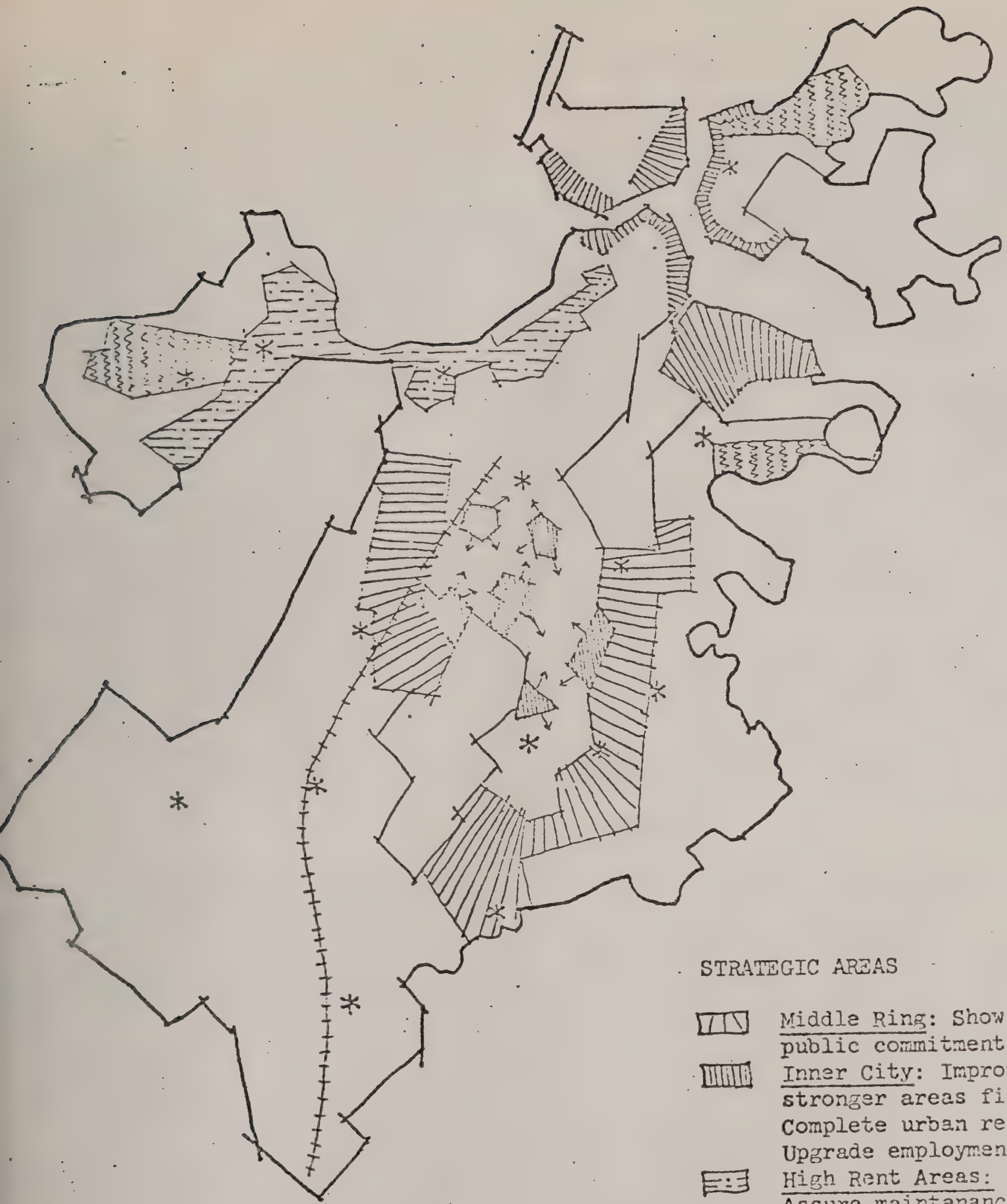
Values of single family houses are going up in a large part of the City. I think it's interesting to note the rising values in East Boston, South Boston and Jamaica Plain However, there are areas where values are declining and I think Lew pointed this out that when you do have low values, families who are upwardly mobile are encouraged to buy homes in this area and this has encouraged the black migration into some areas.

During the 1970's, I think that the changes that occurred during the 60's will continue, but they are going to be more gradual. You won't have the strong black migration from the South. The educational centers that attracted young adults from outside are not growing as greatly as they did during the 1960's, but in terms of these areas, I think the changes will be more gradual and more easily assimulated and you won't have the kind of community disruption or overnight change that happened during the 60's. We'll be aiming at bolstering confidence and bolstering values in these areas to stabilize the kind of changes happening in those areas.

Map # 5 shows some of the areas where there are high rents in apartments and it is an area where we need to have attention given to absentee landlords to make sure that as these high rents go up, the city, the people who are living in the housing benefit in terms of improved housing conditions also. The dotted areas indicate areas that might be attracted to absentee areas. They are areas that currently have low rents but where housing values went up during the 1960's. I think these are areas where we have to be particularly cautious in seeing that homeownership is maintained by encouraging families, the ones that are moving in, to buy, the ones that are there not to sell to absentee owners to stay and make sure that they feel satisfied with their community.

MAP #4


SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS
CONSERVATION
IMPROVEMENT
REVITALIZATION
COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
* AID TO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
URBAN RENEWAL AREA



STRATEGIC AREAS

- ▨ Middle Ring: Show public commitment.
- ▥ Inner City: Improve stronger areas first. Complete urban renewal. Upgrade employment.
- ▤ High Rent Areas: Assure maintenance.
- ≋ Rising Markets: Preserve home ownership.
- ▥ Harbor Communities: Improve waterfront.
- +++ Southwest Corridor: Develop to benefit area.
- * Focal Points: Upgrade environment.

INVESTMENT IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Over a third of the housing, office development and commercial, the investment is going to be going into the young areas; in fact, over half of the housing investment is going into the young area. It also should be noted that medical, higher educational investment is more spread out, it's going into a lot of different areas and particularly interesting are the major educational facilities that are going to be aimed at resident population as against the 1960's where most of the educational development was aimed at people who might be coming outside of the Boston Metropolitan area, I think that you have had a number of discussions about we expect over 100,000 new jobs in the Market in the 70's. The fact that this major educational investment will be aimed at the young residents of Boston means we hope that our young adults prepare for the kinds of jobs that are being made available nationally and in Boston.

Also along those lines is industrial development. Six months ago, there wasn't anything or there was very little, there were some kind of city-wide things that we knew about in the industrial development. Currently, we have added to that picture, we note that the Navy Yard in Boston will have industrial development, there are opportunities that E.D.I.C. is packaging to put together many industrial parks in a number of locations and as the southwest corridor plans get pulled together there are some visions that they're likely to include industrial development. That is going to also help the blue collar population. Of course, you have to remember that over two thirds of Bostons' employees are white collar employees.

On the public investment, these figures do not include a million and a half dollars going into areas that affect more than one area but what they do show is that in general the investment is spread out over most of the city, but it's somewhat lower in the inner suburbs than the outer suburban areas. This is something we want to address ourselves to and particularly to the inner suburbs and outer suburbs because these are areas where public investment are important to build confidence in those areas.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

Map # 5 is a sketchy diagram that highlights some of the areas that we think are strategic and need attention. The urban renewal areas need completion. The high rent apartment areas, need something like code enforcement to make sure that those rents go into good maintenance. Around U. Mass. and in the older Harbor areas we need to not only have code enforcement, but programs which will demonstrate the city's interest in those areas and make them attractive for families. I think in the paper that Lew just sent out to you he said, what will keep the 25 to 34 year olds stable in the neighborhoods that they choose to move into? One thing is that as they grow older they're going to be ready for schools and we need to be sure that schools in those areas are top notch.

Then around the area where there is black population, where there are changes in value--this area has over 40% of their homeowners who are elderly and it's an area that is very likely to change. It's very likely to have young families moving into it and those are areas where we also have to be sure that both the existing black population and the neighboring white populations have confidence in their areas. It's important that both of them do. The young blacks who have moved into these areas are very stable families. They have moderate, steady incomes. They're interested in the investment, if they're homeowners, that they've made in the housing there. The homeownership rate has held up well. We want to see those families make a commitment to their communities and I think that the organization of community groups in that area shows that the people there are very interested in commitment to the area.

In the model cities area, job training and some social programs are very important. The incomes in these areas are definitely lower than in the rest of Boston and in order to have improvement in housing and neighborhood conditions, it's extremely important that the incomes in those areas are improved. There are also stronger neighborhoods where if you're short on money, the way we always are it's a very wise investment to make sure that they are well maintained.

Within 5 to 10 years the Southwest corridor will become of a very important new development area in the City. The plans are in the early stage there.

Next week you're going to be getting into the discussion of housing policies; I haven't gone into that at all, but one of our major efforts has been a discussion of how to operate the tools that the city has to deal with; housing and policies for where upper and middle income housing should go; lower and moderate income housing and targets for the number of units; but since you'll be getting into that in the next session, I'll leave it until then.

A very important part of our program for planning for the neighborhoods is the capital improvements program and these charts #6,7,8 show capital and public facilities during the 1960's, 1967 and 1968 & '72, '73 to 82. The important thing to note is the large increase that is being projected in public improvements. Our planning has focused mainly on getting a handle on population projections, investment on housing policies, on capital improvements, on priorities for revenue sharing - there are a lot of things we haven't touched on which are equally important. Crime is a very important concern in stabilizing neighborhood schools and these are things that we hope to address ourselves to eventually.

Kirk O'Donnell: Thank you, Alex, Somebody introduced me here today as the Mayor's neighborhood man and I'll tell you I appreciated that because I'm usually introduced in the neighborhoods as the Mayor's man and that get's somewhat of a different reaction. I guess I am the neighborhood man and my credibility was immediately established by Mr. Emerson when he asked, Where do I live? Well, I live in Dorchester near Ashmont Station, (which I think since I moved there 2 yrs. ago showed a lot of good sense on my part.)

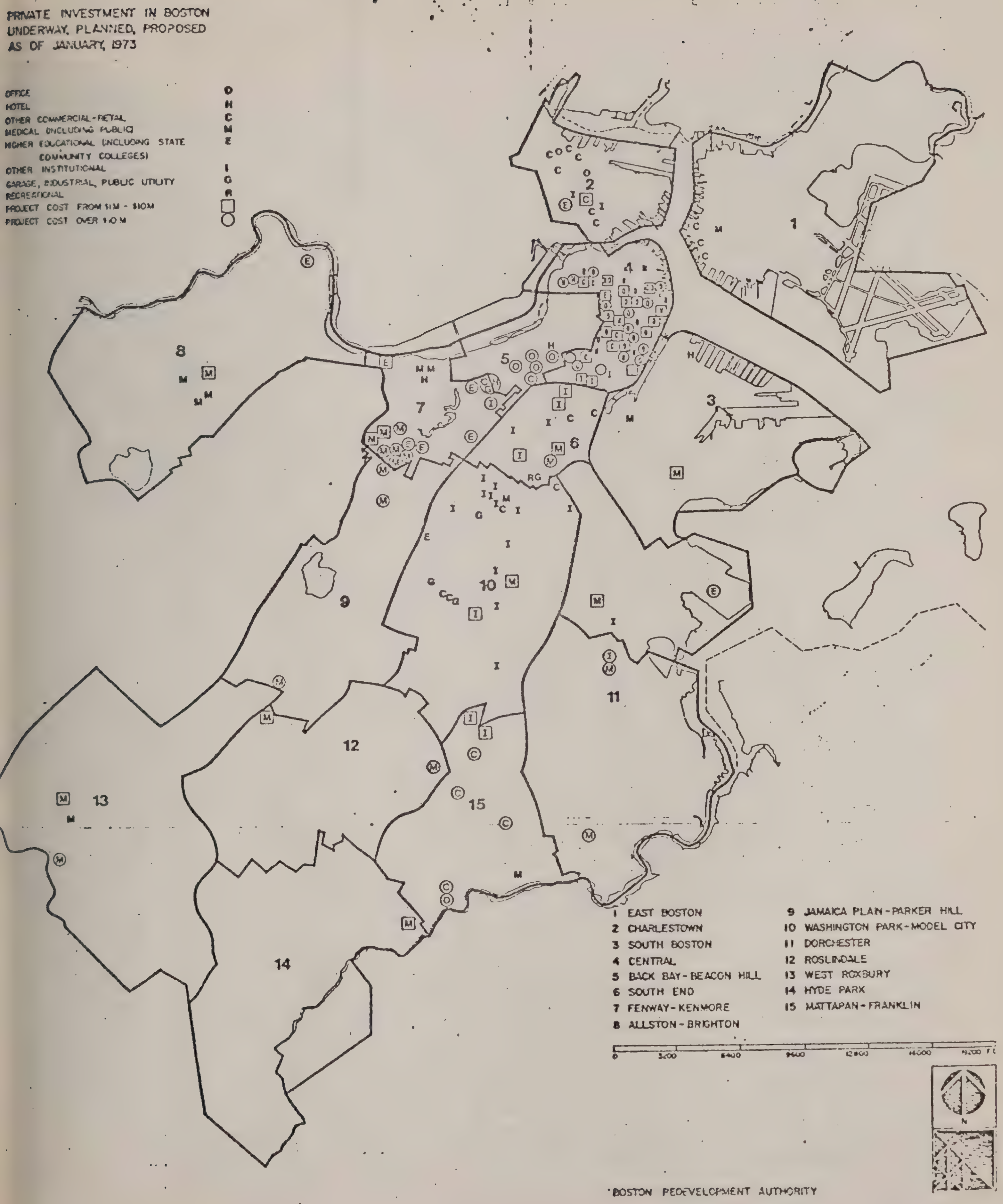
I have prepared some remarks to talk about the Little City Hall Programs in my role as the administrator of the program. Well, I do that all the time and I really don't think that's what we're here to talk about today. We're really here to talk about the City and the city's neighborhoods and not how I administer a Program to deal with those neighborhoods.

Boston reflects some problems; problems that really affect all the cities. Thomas Jefferson originally said when he put together what the country would be all about (he, more than anybody else did that, maybe with a little bit of set back in the Federalist Papers and the Constitution, and his arguments with Hamilton): when we get piled upon one another in large cities we shall become corrupt as they are in Europe. When the process of the American City began of bringing lower class people in the city, the reformers on the American scene in the late 19th Century were aghast. They were really aghast. They were aghast at the new class character of the city and what people were really looking for in the city and at the quality of city government. A. D. White would say: "the city governments in the U.S. were the worst than in christendom; the most expensive; the most inefficient and the most corrupt. .Josiah Strong, a social gospel reformer, would say the struggle for liberty in America has been a struggle to rest power from the one or the few and to lodge it with the many;" That is, to de-centralize government. The movement to centralize government by transferring power from the Council to the Mayor was a confession that popular government in our great cities had failed.

Beginning with his statement in the 1880's and leading up to 1951, the government of the City of Boston has been a progression of taking government away from the people-of ending democracy in the city. We come from the point in the 1880's where we had a cameral legislature with a weak executive to the point now where we have an at-large city council without any district representation that doesn't have the right to initiate legislation. It doesn't have the right to appropriate funds and that's not a legislature, not by any means.

We have a very strong Chief Executive. Now that's more efficient. Centralization is always more efficient. De-centralization should usually be more responsive. Just like the reformers in the 19th century didn't understand what the dynamics of the city were about, the same thing is reflected in us today. The Little City Hall Program is a response to that. The Little City Hall Program occurred in Boston because of Urban Renewal to a great extent.

MAP #6


PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN BOSTON
UNDERWAY, PLANNED, PROPOSED
AS OF JANUARY, 1973
OFFICE O
HOTEL H
OTHER COMMERCIAL-RETAIL C
MEDICAL (INCLUDING PUBLIC) M
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL (INCLUDING STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGES) E
OTHER INSTITUTIONAL I
GARAGE, INDUSTRIAL, PUBLIC UTILITY G
RECREATIONAL R
PROJECT COST FROM $1M - $10M □
PROJECT COST OVER $10M ○
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HILL
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY-KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK-MODEL CITY
11 DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN-FRANKLIN
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3200
6400
9600
12800
16000
19200 FT
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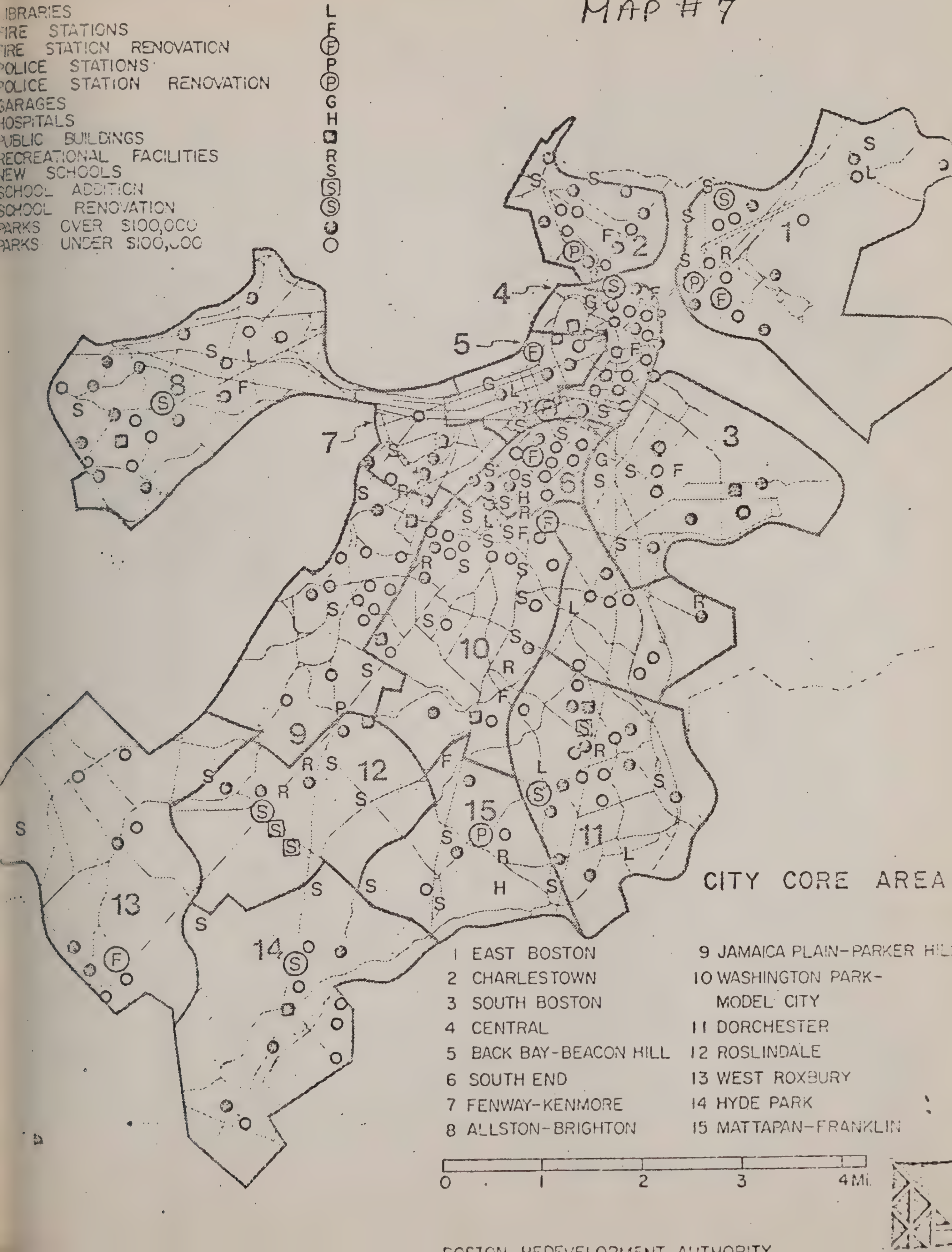
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION, PARK IMPROVEMENTS, AND OTHER FACILITIES
HE PROGRAM, 1973-1982

MAP # 7


IBRARIES L
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UBLIC BUILDINGS ◘
ECREATIONAL FACILITIES R
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CHOOL ADDITION S
CHOOL RENOVATION Ⓢ
ARKS OVER $100,000 ●
ARKS UNDER $100,000 ○
CITY CORE AREA
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HILL
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY-KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HIL
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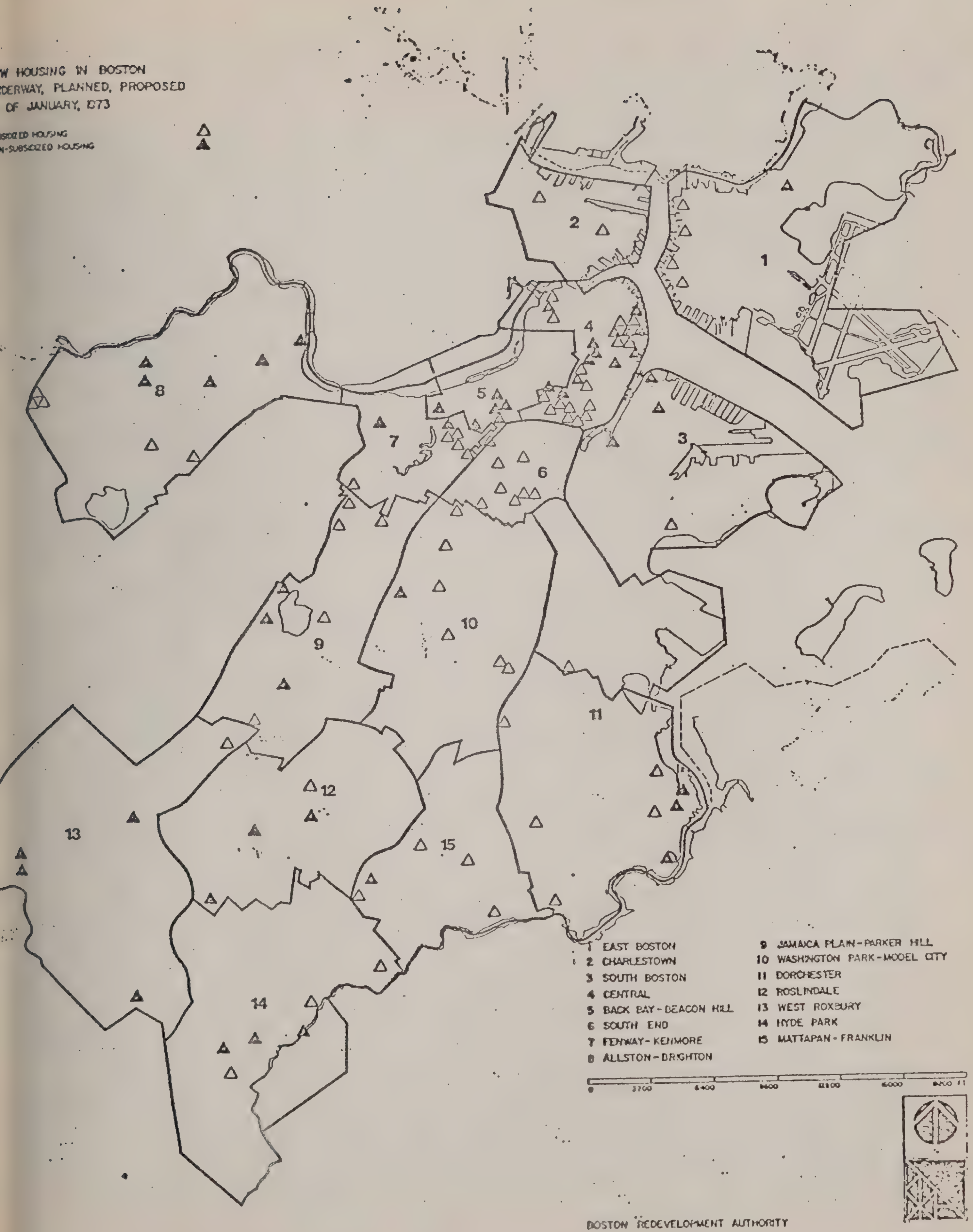
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MAP #8



W HOUSING IN BOSTON
DERWAY, PLANNED, PROPOSED
OF JANUARY, 1973

SIDIZED HOUSING △
N-SUBSIDIZED HOUSING ▲
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1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL
5 BACK BAY - BEACON HILL
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY - KENMORE
8 ALLSTON - BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN - PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK - MODEL CITY
11 DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN - FRANKLIN
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BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Kevin White was running against Edward D. Logue in 1967 and Logue was certainly unfairly labeled as a "downtown mayor". We did our best to label him with things like the West End. (The BRA always wonders why people won't forget the West End. The Emperor of Japan was wondering why the Americans wouldn't forget Pearl Harbor when he couldn't drop by the U.S. a few years ago. It's not going to be forgotten and it's a shame, but it's a reality that they have to deal with.)

Boston does not have three major avenues of political responsiveness. It doesn't have political parities; there's no place for the outs to be in. It doesn't have political machines; Curley destroyed those when he beat Honey Fitz. And it doesn't have district representation. So, the large geographic groups in this city have no representation. There are also large ethnic groups, running from blacks to what one would consider the native American Wasp who aren't represented on the city council. As a result of that there's a considerable alienation in Boston. Boston has the highest level of alienation of any city in the country, and this is by studies. I think it's a curious mixture really of the Puritan self-doubt and the Irish-Catholic legalism and sense of original sin which comes out to what Mark-Twain once said: "I'm going to speak to a Boston audience - 400 critics"

Beyond that cultural heritage, we are in a situation where the Mayor, in order to stay Mayor, made himself accountable in the neighborhoods. Now Mel King calls it the "illusion of inclusion" and he's right. It's not community control. We had a real identity crisis in Little City Halls because we organized community groups against neighborhoods. We went out and we felt that if we organized a community group we were representatives to the city. So we went out and organized a community group and tell the Mayor don't build any low-cost housing in Dorchester and then he wonders why he ever put a Little City Hall out there.

We didn't understand the essential dynamics of what the city was all about. We changed; the Mayor got political, he got a hold of me, (I was a teacher outside of Fall River and involved in his Governor's campaign) and I really feel that the roles of Little City Halls is as a part of the Mayor's decision of making process: that he is accountable in a neighborhood. For anything this administration does in the neighborhood (and I was the Little City Hall Manager in Fields Corner in a particularly vulnerable position.) You know there's someone whose going to be responsible.

We are part of the input into that decision making process. The Mayor says that he's going to build elderly housing in Lower Mills in Dorchester and it's going to be 15 stories high. I have to tell him that the people of Dorchester around that area don't want that. But I understand it when he said the elderly people of the city need this, so it will be built. That's really the difference; between city government and town government. Town government is essentially anti-metropolitan-exclusionary- and it's self-governing. The city is not self-governing.

The role of the Little City Halls and what I fight for is that the manager's become part of the Mayor's decision-making policy. That just doesn't go to the Mayor. That goes to the capital budget process in the city; Who would know in this building that there's a significant black population around Franklin Field that's Haitian and they don't want a golf course, they want cricket courts. That's the kind of thing that comes out of the Little City Hall Program. Because you're accountable in that neighborhood, you can not ignore when an institution or university arrives in the neighborhood.

Now I have an office seven floors up with secretaries, doors, and a view of the Harbor and you know, I don't have to answer the phone calls, but I have to answer those people who would walk into my office and say: "What are you going to do about that institution?" Freddie Salvucci in East Boston had to answer those people on Neptune Rd. who said: "What are you going to do about those airplanes?" The guys from the South End to Hyde Park were accountable to the people about the highway and what were we going to do about that?

We are part of the process in various decision-making processes in the city that occur below the Mayor's level. That gets us into the presentation today. When I revamped my research and planning in the Little City Halls, I brought in all systems analysts. But someone once said the problem with McNamara's analysis of the Vietnam War was that systems analysts want to build a heirarchy of importance, that which is measurable is very important, that which is difficult to measure is less important and that which is non-measurable is un-important. And I really feel that in working at the presentation that there's a lack in the analysis of the neighborhoods here, both in the presentation and the discussion paper which I just read the BRA's view of a first to go out and find out what is important to making importance in terms of measuring. Why is the population growth something to be excited about? Why is the rise of higher income people in the city something to be excited about? When you measure that there will be a decline in the black migration in the South, is that bad or good? "Transitional neighborhood," what kind of a concept is that? If any neighborhood is good, it's in transition.

This doesn't get down into measuring what the people in the city are actually thinking and the only way you do that is to get out there, be in that neighborhood. I think that the kinds of deceptions that occur that I get from talking to some of you people in the room is the view of the city from driving the main streets. Well main streets in the city have become like railroad lines in the 19th century. No one wants to live on a main arterial highway. The view of Dorchester is not the Sidney St. 3-decker that are across from the Globe, though even that's deceiving.

Sidney Street is deceiving, things aren't as bad as they look from the back porch. That's not what the city's about. I really feel that to understand what the city's about I think you have to have a larger role in the historical sense of the city and that might be my basic answer. I sound very, anti-intellectual or sound anti-measurement. I was never very good at measurement, I always flunked Math and didn't do too well in Sciences, but you know, I like to think of myself as a humanist. What the city is about is what the German expression was when cities were re-introduced in Medieval times-the air of the city is free. The city is a social and economic ladder for different dise franchised classes. Most of the views of the American Revolution are that it was not brought about by ruled and battled farmers. It was brought about by an urban merchant class represented by the likes of John Hancock and Samuel Adams and people like that; an urban merchant class that was threatened of being disenfranchised by the English Gentry and the King reversing the policies of salutary neglect.

The city's real role and the role of this city is as a social and economic ladder. The role of the neighborhoods is that they are observable to the person who lives in the neighborhood. When my Grandmother landed in the North End and my father was born in Roxbury and brought up in Jamaica Plain and I was brought up in West Roxbury, there was a social progression. There was an economic progression. The cities are the agents in this country as well as any other country of the growth of capitalism; the growth of those people who are the disenfranchised. And they are not always disenfranchised because of economic reasons. My landlord in Dorchester is a Lithuwanian Refugee who moved to South Boston and works in a factory, was a Professor of Latin Lithuwania and has now moved out to Dorchester and fortunately, does not want to move to Milton.

In that sense neighborhoods have to change in really two ways. In the map here of the Urban Dynamics Lines show Beacon Hill and the North End. Beacon Hill goes like this and the North End goes like that. Well, I think the North End's a better neighborhood for the city. Why do I think it, well it was a place where by Grandmother could land. There are two factors in the neighborhood. One is that the neighborhood either has to serve that kind of role that when someone moves from one neighborhood to the next neighborhood, that they are not despairing of the process of living in the city, that they [illegible] they're making progress. They know that they're overcoming the greatest crisis that we face and that is confidence in the future of the city. When a black family moves out of lower Roxbury to Roxbury Highlands and eventually gets into Mattapan, that should show that they're moving on a social and economic scale.

Now the second factor is the factor of a neighborhood changing in terms of people within the neighborhood changing. Within neighborhoods if there's a decision that a neighborhood be upgraded, it should not be upgraded by the fact that 25 and 34 year old sons and daughters of suburbanite families who are going to college move in. But there is a significant upgrading of the people who live in that neighborhood and for one reason or another they decide not to move along that social and economic ladder. The sort of un-slumming that went on in the No. End and the sort of un-slumming that would have gone on in the West End should occur in that neighborhood.

That also was an extremely healthy process and I really feel from driving around the city that these profits of doom are being proven wrong. There is process ocurring. Mattapan, for example, once----and the end of it around St. Angeles Parish got together is indeed staying as a middle-class neighborhood. It's going to be all black, but it's going to be middle-class. It won't be like Roxbury Highlands down to Morton St. Wellington Hill is being middle-class and I think that that's important, there's not much of a difference from Francis Russell's article in the National Review about what Blue Hill Avenue was like when he lived there and the native Americans were moving out.

I think that's vital and I think in terms of my view what we're dealing with in the city and what we're threatened by with in the city is the prosperity in the city. There wasn't a lot of movement in terms of population for a long time in the city because there wasn't a lot of economic opportunity. We don't have as many black people as other cities, because we didn't have the economic opportunity in the city. It wasn't a healthy, vital growing city. Between 1860 and 1960 it was a city marked by economic stagnation and not really real growth, now it's growth. I think that what we should know and be aware of is that we need the change. The change is good; the change is good in the city and it should occur. I would be worried if blacks stopped moving here from the South, I really would, I'd wonder why they did, because you know, their initial reasons for moving in are very, very good.

I feel just to end it up is that we face some real problems in terms of whether the North End will take on the character of the waterfront. People in this administration, in the Mayor's Office, are all moving into the North End. I think that Charlestown faces some real problems, some real problems in terms of its change in character. I think there's real problems as we all know in Brighton and in Allston in terms of whose going to live there. And surprisingly enough the BRA is taking over sections of Dorchester, Ashmont Hill is becoming a preserve of the Redevelopment Authority planners, moving into the Victorian Houses. I moved in, I displaced a working class Irish family in Dorchester.

The city is too prosperous and really for the good of those people who should prosper from the city and we put out artificial controls like Rent Control so that we control that prosperity. I think in terms of looking at the city in terms of its housing stock, in terms of that which is observable and measurable can be most deceiving. I really think that the problems that we do face are the problems of prosperity not decline.

Eli Post: I want to make reference to the point about the analyst who said we focused on issues we can measure rather than the important things. He touched on a very important point, one that Alex and I have talked about very much. I think it was Krushchev who said that "If a pig had wings it could fly." The BRA is like a little fat pig, full of data, numbers and charts, but we don't quite have wings and we can't get ourselves off the ground. We can't launch the kind of program and response that they would imply. We talked about black migration, student migration or changes in higher rents, lower rents and on and on and on, but we don't get an answer. That's not the point of the data. The point of the data is not to tell you what we're doing and not to tell you about the solution but to give a systematic approach for solving problems. This purpose is to provide a sufficient data so that the city can identify the points of leverage and act affirmatively in those cases. Either this year or next year the Congress is going to pass Community Revenue Sharing legislation that would change the whole character of urban funding.

In the absence of this kind of systematic approach, the city will not be in a position to decide how those scarce funds are spent. It appears now that in Boston they get something like $60 to $81 million for the next 3 or 4 yrs. to use either for code enforcment or vocational training or urban renewal or the like and it's important to have----today as a basis for existing, otherwise you're going to get a reputation of----that bear no relationship to the kinds of changes that are occuring in the city today.

Lew Alfeld: Well, I'm not sure that I have anything to add to what I think was a very excellent presentation by Kirk O'Donnell on the kind of problems that I am still struggling with myself in trying to identify what is a neighborhood like. The preliminary paper that I wrote was a first attempt of struggling with this question of what causes changes in neighborhoods. What is the role of a neighborhood? How does it operate? Why does it change? We call that in Urban Dynamics a structural question. What is the structure of the system that is causing changes? I think that the only way that we're going to get to those answers is to listen to people like Kirk O'Donnell, who know what neighborhoods are and who have a perception of neighborhood change and can identify why certain things occur.

I might differ with what I might have interpreted from the jist of the Eli Post's comment that the data helps you find the leverage points in the System. I think it's understanding the local neighborhoods that helps you find the leverage points, but the data then can be very useful in determining which of those leverage points you need operate or push today and which ones tomorrow and which ones maybe 10 yrs. from now and which ones you want to leave alone entirely. We're still a long way, I think, all of us, in finding any concrete answers. But we're at least beginning to realize that the system is a great deal more complex than we might have imagined 10 yrs. ago and that it's going to require a lot of analysis to find out what we really can do and are capable of doing and to try to build things.

Dun Gifford: I'd like to put in a good word for the BRA and its presentation and what seems to me an increasing sophistication of fact-gathering and fact-analysis capacity. It's always helpful to me and I'm sure to the rest of us here to have no. 1 the knowledge produced by the BRA available and no. 2 to know that if the knowledge is available to whoever it is who is making policy on capital budget allocations on the BRA target priority areas and so on. That's an impressive piece of work, Alex, and I think that you and your group ought to know that one member of the real estate fraternity thinks so.

Donald Stone: (Commerce & Manpower) I can't share Kirk's great suspicion with numerical measurement, although I think he said something that is perhaps not completely stressed as much as it should be and that is that there's probably a strong difference in the expectations of those who are in the system that's being planned, as compared to those who are planning the system. He said it rather nicely when he asked: What difference does it make that income groups may be moving from one part of the city to the other.

I heard recently that there was a strong difference in the output of the school system here in Boston in terms of college placement; much lower college placement than in a city such as Brookline. The person who was giving me that information was interpreting it in a negative way and saying well, you know, we've got to do something to get this placement up. From my own origins and backgroudn, I would say the same thing. But, both he and I are imposing their own values on it and in accordance with the expectations of those who are using it. It may be that because of the working class and lower income and minority group concentrations in the school system, the parents of the school system really don't impose that expectation upon their children. I realize the economic implications of a school system that puts out 75% of its students that perhaps immediately enter the labor force as opposed to one in which the students go on to higher training and enter the occupational ladder at a higher level.

I think what Kirk says is particularly important for the excellent work that the BRA is doing that these trends can be seen and trends can be obtained, but interpreting these trends always conotes some kind of value judgement attached to it. I just found it very refreshing to see the fact stressed that there is a difference in the city between those who live in the neighborhood and what their expectations are and perhaps those who come to work in the city and make decisions in the city, but are not a part of that kind of system.

Kirk O'Donnell: I'd like to respond to that. First of all I have nothing against the whole collection of data, I don't think that the data is useless; by no means, what I say is what you ended up with. The conclusions drawn by the data are drawn by people who have middle class prejudices, all right. Most of the planners in the BRA are middle-class planners and the BRA is a middle and upper-class institution so that when they see wealthy people moving into the city they assume that is a good thing. It's the conclusions I'm objecting to not the data. That is the reason the BRA gave me a bomb as a gift one day, really it was a 250-pounder.

You point to institutional growth and where the kids from Boston go to school. That was a problem I faced immediately as a Little City Hall manager. From everything that was observable when U. Mass. was going to move to Columbia Point everybody assumed that there would be a housing crisis. But I was brought up in the city and I remember there used to be an opera house opposite Northeastern. Many wanted us to build dormitories. I remember the opera house went down and they built a dormitory. When they built the dormitory it didn't solve the student problem, it caused a student problem, and there are a lot of reasons for that.

I also thought of all my friends from So. Boston and Dorchester who went to Boston College. There's a reason why B. U. and Northeastern and B. C. are along trolly lines and my basic view toward U. Mass. was that a housing problem is like a lot of housing problems, the result of another factor. If Suffolk University wouldn't turn over Beacon Hill then possibly U. Mass. won't turn over Dorchester and how do they avoid that. Well they do that by not becoming like U. Mass. in Amherst, which has 2/3rds of the student body from 1/3rd of the top income group in this state and by being sure the working class people in the city have the opportunity. They have the desire to go to college, but they don't have the Board scores and the Board scores are very, very arbitrary and very relative. The experiment with C.C.N.Y. showed to a degree that ethnics would want to go to universities, if U. Mass.,Boston continued to educate 50% of their students from the lower income classes. There will not be a housing crisis. Mark Twain once said that "of course, every student wants to go away to school and so do his parents want him to go away to school." But the economic realities were not there and we worked and I think it's to the great, great credit of Eli and working for the Columbia Point Plan that we work in a cooperative effort with the University and with the community under the most difficult of circumstances. It looks like not only will there be a great change in the University, but it might bring changes in that entire area.

My basic point is that these people are drawing conclusions. I see my job as to go to the people about who the conclusions are being drawn and find out what they think.

Judy Weirs: Just some comments about what one survey of people found and what people want in the community. A year ago Boston Urban Observatory did a survey of 500 residents in the city and over 60% in most of the communities were satisfied with their communities in general when they were asked what kinds of improvements you'd like to see in your neighborhood. The basic answer in most of the neighborhoods was we want renovation, fix-up, beautification, that kind of thing.

When asked about what sort of improved services people would like from the city they pointed to police protection. Schools were important in West Roxbury. In most of the other areas people were pretty satisfied. In the inner city people were distinctly dis-satisfied with the schools. And that's sort of a picture of what people think right now about their area.

The End of Meeting, Adjourned

PLANNING FOR BOSTON'S NEIGHBORHOODS;
SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

TRANSCRIPT OF BRA-MIT-URBAN DYNAMICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE INC. DIALOGUE MEETING, DECEMBER 13, 1973

Frederick Pikielek Comments

Philip Zeigler Comments

Barbara Dumke Comments

John Weis Comments

Little City Halls Fact Sheet

Louis E. Alfeld Paper

December 1973

Kevin H. White, Mayor
City of Boston

Robert T. Kenney, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee, Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program December 13, 1973

PLANNING FOR BOSTON'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Hank Emerson: The next meeting will be January 10 in which we're going to discuss the city's housing program. Without any further comments, I'm going to just turn the meeting over to Alex, who will introduce the team, who will give us the city's presentation on Neighborhood Development strategy and then we'll allow time for Lew Alfeld with MIT's comments and then comments and questions from the rest of you.

Alex Ganz: Today we're going to deal with Boston's neighborhoods; the planning and developing strategy that is underway as well as what is actually happening in the neighborhoods. In the 60's Boston focused on redevelopment of certain inner-city and older neighborhoods. Since then, a lot has happened. A lot of favorable factors of strength, including growth in jobs, growth in income, reversal of population decline, plus an expanded city committment in terms of public investment and a private sector committment. All of this makes possible a newer effort and a broader effort toward redevelopment, planning for all of the city neighborhoods and today we want to tell you a little about it. I would like to introduce the 3 persons who will make some remarks to you about this question: Carla Okigwe, planning officer, Judith Weirs, planning officer and Kirk O'Donnell of the Mayor's Office of Public Services (the Mayor's Little City Hall Program) who will tell you a little about what's actually happening in the neighborhoods. I would just like to mention that we also have here today Bob Walsh from the BRA Community Development Department. Essentially he's involved with implementing in part some of the aspects of the planning and developing strategy that Carla and Judy will tell you about:

Carla Okigwe:

INTRODUCTION

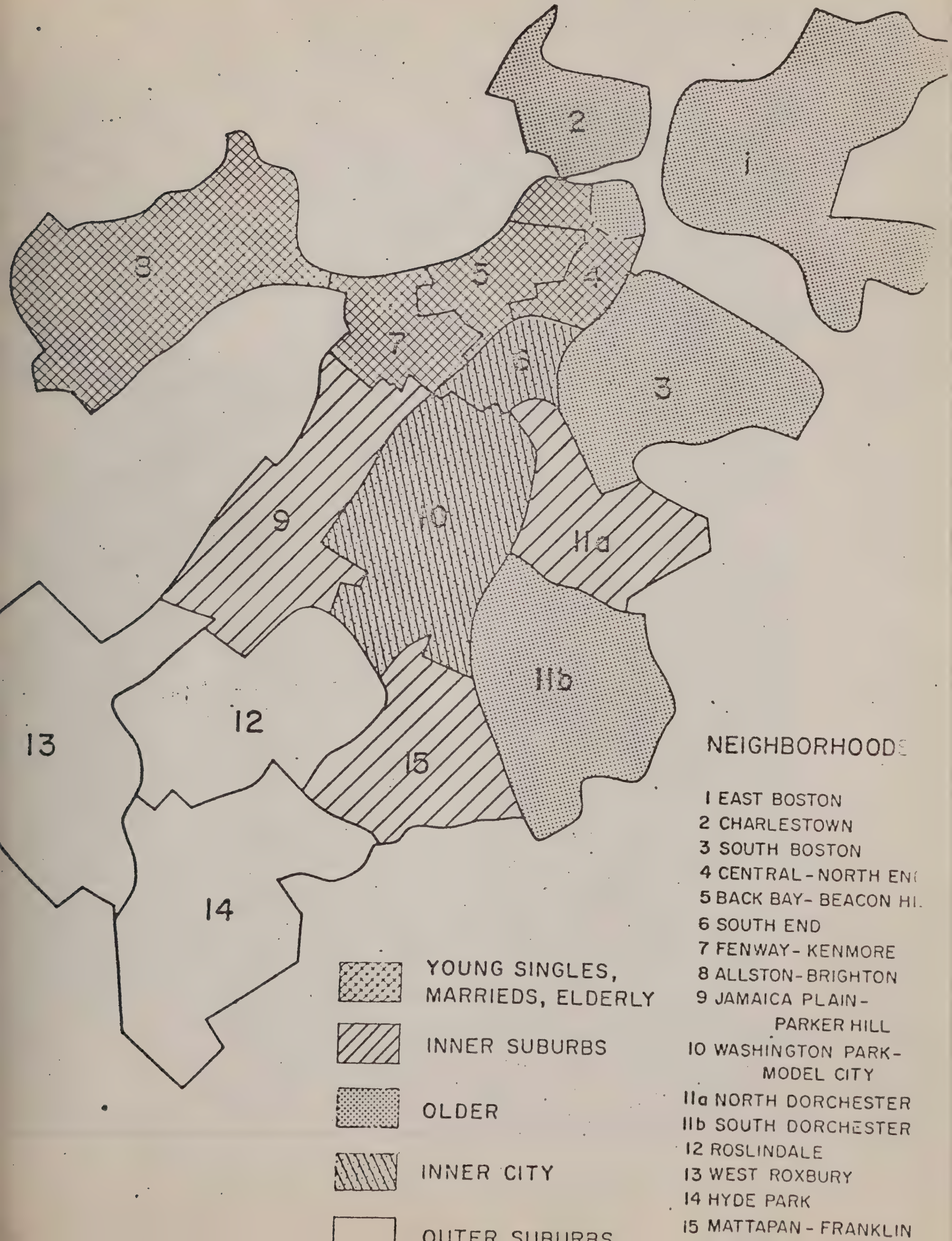
Judy Weirs & I have been working in the BRA Planning Dept. for about the last year now and we've been involved in a city-wide level, but looking at neighborhoods in a comparative kind of way. We've been interested occasionally to go into our library and find past things such as the Master Plan for 1950 and we find they're the same problems as we have now. Things have changed though.

One of the troubles that Boston was having during the 60's was the decline in population and a troublesome economy. Fortunately, Boston did choose to focus its efforts in the area of creating jobs and in re-vitalizing the downtown area and the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. Map #_1_illustrates the 1960's in this part of Boston. Now, we still have a major commitment to fulfill to our neighborhoods in terms of making them more livable and that's what is essentially the subject of today's session. In the 1960's the outlying areas were referred to as general improvement areas and now we are talking about not quite such an amorphous program. We're talking about conservation policies, improvement policies, and re-vitalization policies, focused on perhaps smaller areas or trying to pick up whole neighborhoods to begin the process of revitalizing and making the future appear brighter in the whole area.

For about 4 years now we have had underway a District Planning Program which is also working jointly with the Little City Hall's Program which Kirk will be talking about a little later. District Planners have a 2-level function; one is handling the day-to-day problems that come up in terms of Zoning variance requests and that kind of thing and second to work toward long-range planning efforts in the community zones; a major concern for the 1970's is developing a workable process for citizen participation in improving Boston's neighborhoods.

STRATEGY OF THE 1970'S
BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS

INTRODUCTION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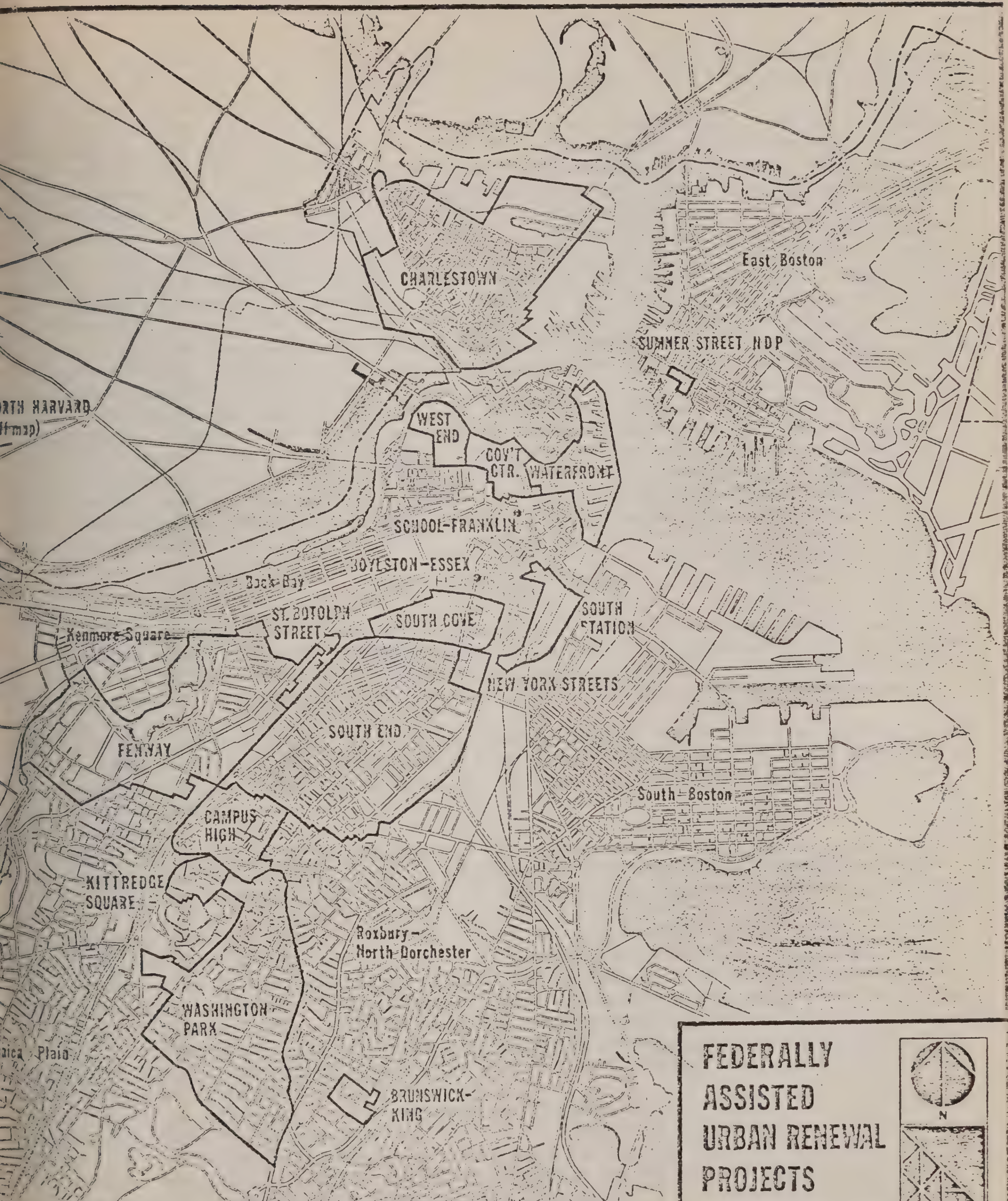
YOUNG SINGLES, MARRIEDS, ELDERLY
INNER SUBURBS
OLDER
INNER CITY
OUTER SUBURBS
NEIGHBORHOODS
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL-NORTH EN
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HI
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY-KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK-MODEL CITY
11a NORTH DORCHESTER
11b SOUTH DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN-FRANKLIN

MAP #1 STRATEGY OF THE 1960'S


CHARLESTOWN
East Boston
SUMNER STREET NDP
ORTH HARVARD
(ff map)
WEST END
GOV'T CTR.
WATERFRONT
SCHOOL-FRANKLIN
BOYLSTON-ESSEX
Back Bay
ST. BOTOLPH STREET
SOUTH COVE
SOUTH STATION
Kenmore Square
NEW YORK STREETS
SOUTH END
FENWAY
South Boston
CAMPUS HIGH
KITTREDGE SQUARE
Roxbury-North Dorchester
WASHINGTON PARK
aica Plain
BRUNSWICK-KING
FEDERALLY ASSISTED URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
N

We have the city in 15 districts at the time being some areas require several little city halls in order to function properly. It might also be nice to have more than one planner as some of the districts----

In the paper that was handed out we attempted to generalize a little about the neighborhoods to give you a feel of the variety in Boston without overwhelming you with too many statistical details about our neighborhoods. We have simplified 5 types of neighborhoods, the sort of the more growing areas where we have increase in population, particularly in young families without children and professionals and single people in Allston-Brighton, The Fenway-Kenmore, Back Bay, Beacon Hill and downtown, all seem to reflect this type of growth. Then we have the older communities which have had some stable long-term population, without reflecting too much change up to now, although some of them have potential for change in the near future. Inner suburbs, which initially had been built as suburbs of Boston, but now, of course, in relation to the lower density areas out here don't have quite the suburban characteristics. The outer suburbs of West Roxbury, Roslindale and Hyde Park and then the inner city area where we have had extensive urban renewal efforts underway. Judy will be talking more particularly about all the trends that are going on in these neighborhoods.

Judy Weirs: I appreciate the opportunity to be here and particularly the incentive that it offered to pull together some of the work that we've been doing over the last couple of years. This is really the first time that we've done that. With community development revenue sharing coming within a year or two we started much more to try and piece together things to develop priorities and this is the initial stepping off in that direction.

MAJOR POPULATION CHANGES

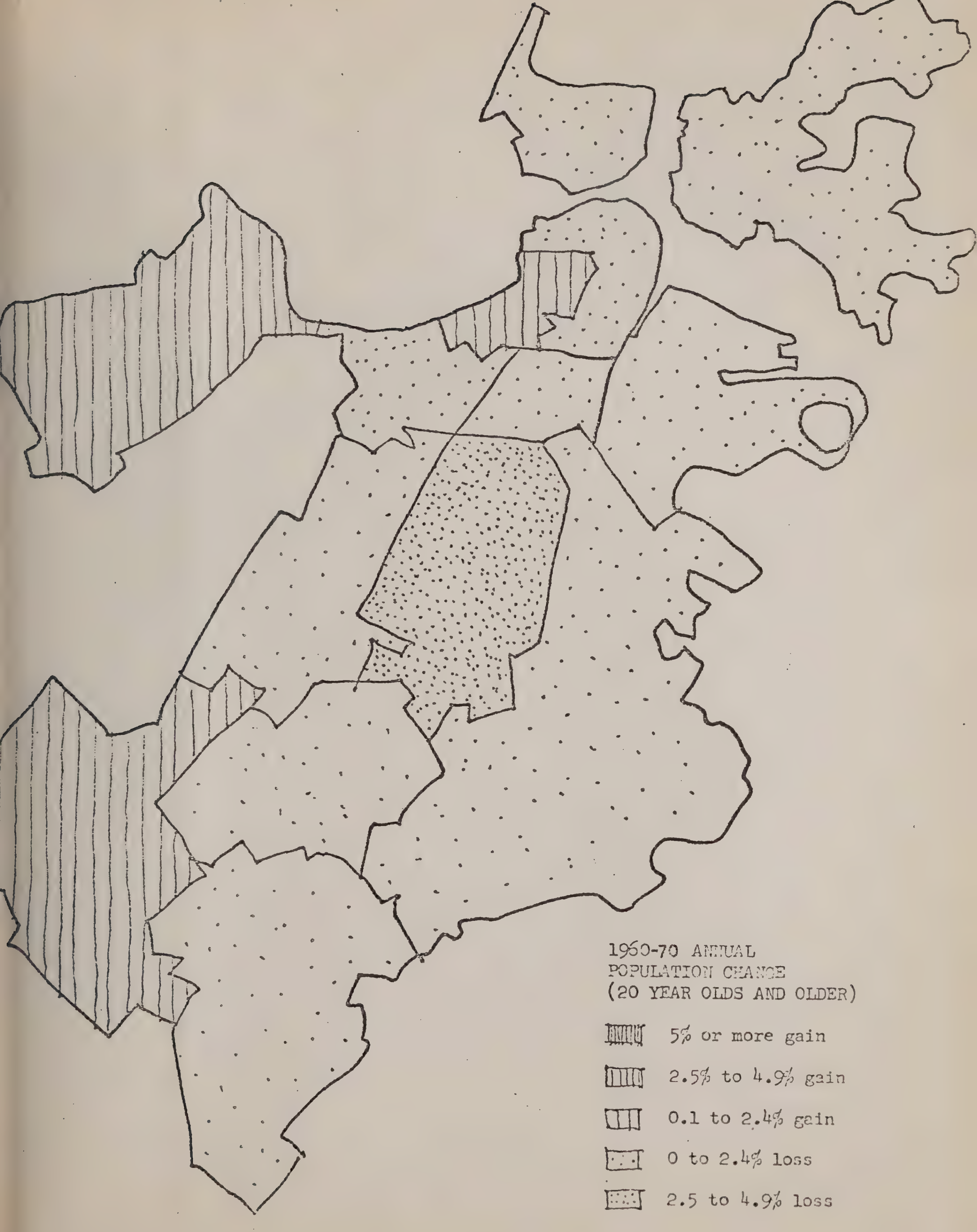
I think in trying to understand what's happening in Boston it's important to focus on some of the natural changes that are taking place. Every neighborhood goes through, as I think Lew pointed out in the paper he circulated, changes of families growing older, housing getting older and then when elderly people sell their houses, new families moving in.

That type of change is going on in neighborhoods all the time, but there are two rather distinctive population changes that have been going on in Boston. In 1960 there was a concentration of 20 to 24-year olds in the Back Bay area which has spread along Commonwealth Ave. in Allston-Brighton down into MissionHill toward the current U. Mass, not the one that just opened. That's one of the major trends. The other is the change in the location of the black population. In 1960 it was centered in the South End and Washington Park. During the 60's the black population migrated toward Franklin Field, slightly along the western edges of Dorchester and into more of the model cities area.

The increase in young adults, not only in the 20 to 24 year-olds, but in the 25 to 34 year olds accompanied the major increase in jobs in the core office buildings. The new people who moved in are very highly skilled and incomes went up markedly in this area. This change in the central part of Boston was accompanied by an almost doubling of the black population as blacks moved in from the South and in some cases, from the Carribean. At the same time almost 30% of the housing units in the South End and Washington Park model cities area were demolished either through urban renewal or through abandonment. That helped to start this migration.

Maps #2, #3 give you an idea of what has happened to population; In the 1960's, there were increases in the Back Bay in Allston-Brighton & West Roxbury. All other areas lost population. The recent police census has indicated to us that this trend has changed drastically recently and most of Boston is now gaining population. Since 1970 we have an increase of 18,000 people in the city. It is concentrated in the core where most of the new development, or the largest portion of it, has taken place. Surprisingly, some of the more suburban areas have begun, or increased their loss in population.

MAP #2



1960-70 ANNUAL
POPULATION CHANGE
(20 YEAR OLDS AND OLDER)

▥ 5% or more gain

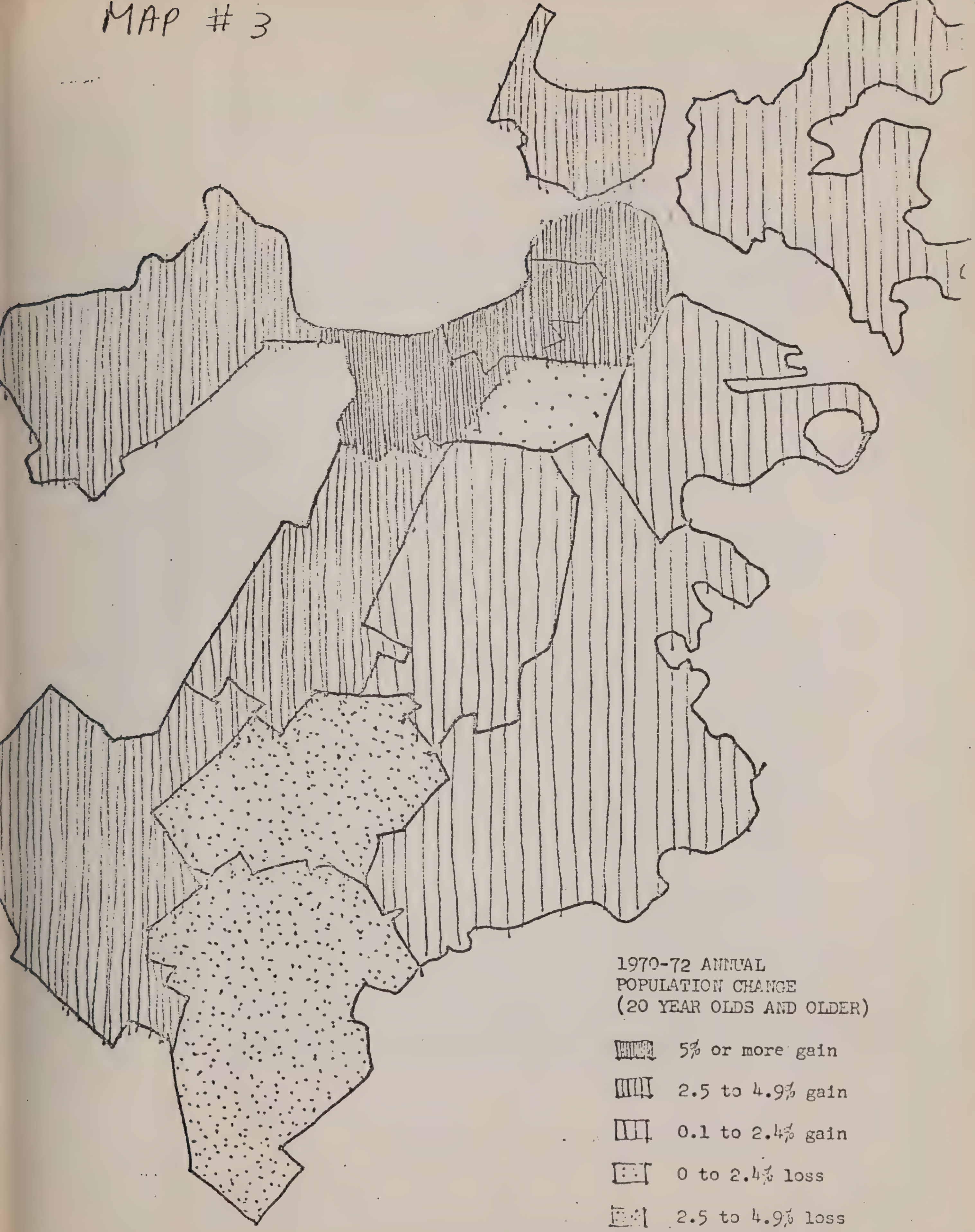
▥ 2.5% to 4.9% gain

▥ 0.1 to 2.4% gain

⛶ 0 to 2.4% loss

⛶ 2.5 to 4.9% loss

MAP # 3



1970-72 ANNUAL POPULATION CHANGE (20 YEAR OLDS AND OLDER)

▥ 5% or more gain
▥ 2.5 to 4.9% gain
▥ 0.1 to 2.4% gain
⬚ 0 to 2.4% loss
⬚ 2.5 to 4.9% loss

These figures tie in with two main changes that I mentioned to you where you have more people, especially in the 25 to 34 year old age group moving into the core. They are also beginning to move into some of the other areas of the city, East Boston, South Boston and Charlestown. The black migration has had some affect and the natural just competition from the suburbs has had some affect on the suburban out migration.

THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Map #4 tries to summarize some of the physical needs in the city. We've pulled together consideration of housing conditions and incomes (those two indicate how much subsidy might be needed to fix up) and combined that with where abandonment is happening to come up with 3 categories: conservation, improvement and the re-vitalization. Conservation means that housing is in fairly good condition, very little, if any, subsidy is needed by families, and there is very little abandonment.

Re-Vitalization means the kind of subsidy that would be needed would be pretty heavy and there is extensive abandonment and maybe extensive vacant land already. Revitalization areas are fairly small. They occur mostly along Dudley St., in model cities. There are some kind of scattered areas in other places.

On the whole, the housing and the neighborhood conditions in Boston are very good and next to other central cities they're excellent. Over half of the housing in Boston needs less than $1,000.00 to bring it up to housing code standards.

Map #4 also notes the urban renewal areas and commercial centers which are a focus of neighborhoods and which could use improvement.

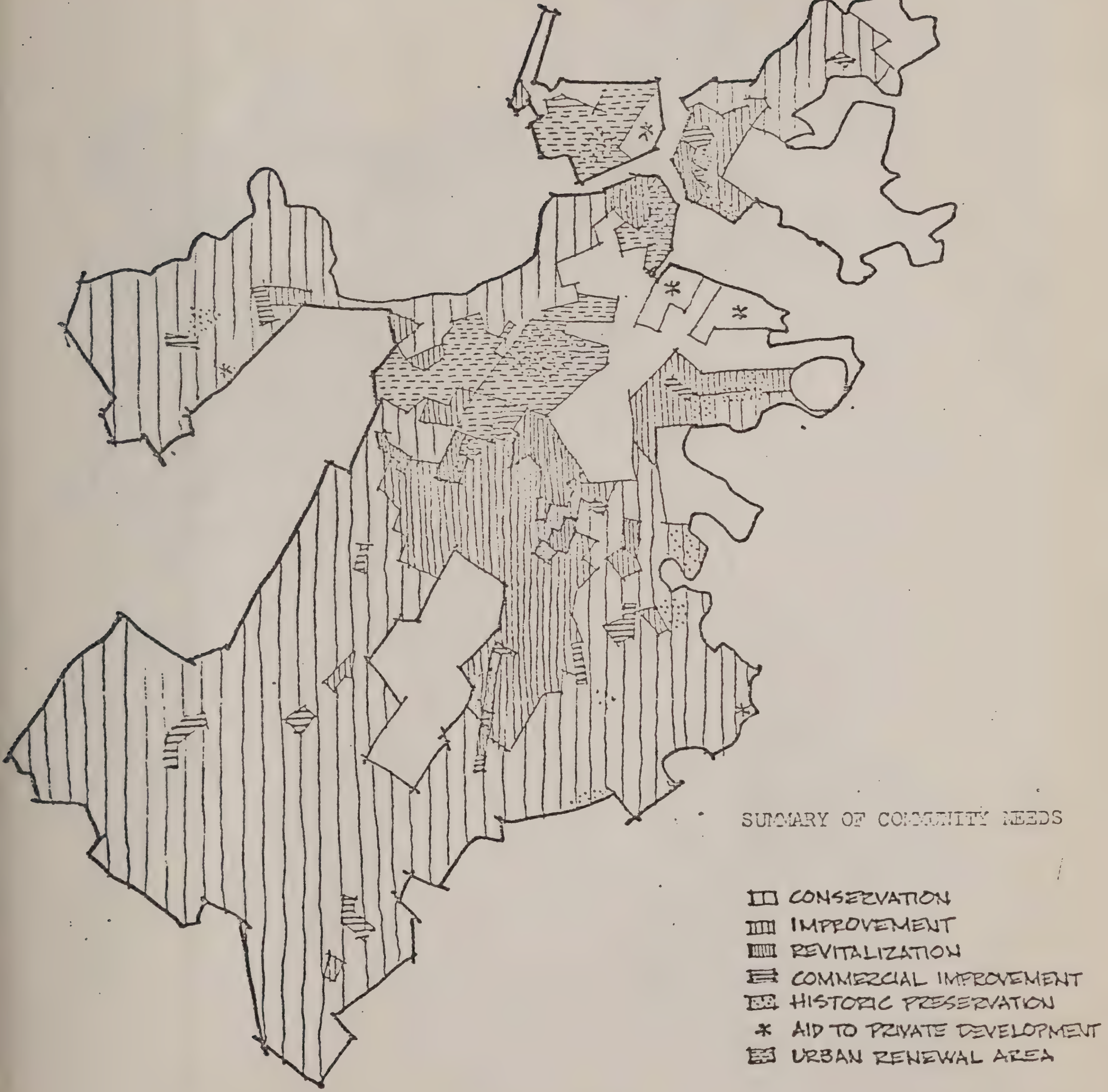
When we start to talk about what to do about improving housing, the important things to realize are the high level of home ownership in the city. In most of the city over 75% of the 1 to 4 unit structures are resident-owned. In most of the South End or downtown areas where you have larger apartment buildings this declines sharply.

Values of single family houses are going up in a large part of the City. I think it's interesting to note the rising values in East Boston, South Boston and Jamaica Plain However, there are areas where values are declining and I think Lew pointed this out that when you do have low values, families who are upwardly mobile are encouraged to buy homes in this area and this has encouraged the black migration into some areas.

During the 1970's, I think that the changes that occurred during the 60's will continue, but they are going to be more gradual. You won't have the strong black migration from the South. The educational centers that attracted young adults from outside are not growing as greatly as they did during the 1960's, but in terms of these areas, I think the changes will be more gradual and more easily assimulated and you won't have the kind of community disruption or overnight change that happened during the 60's. We'll be aiming at bolstering confidence and bolstering values in these areas to stabilize the kind of changes happening in those areas.

Map #5 shows some of the areas where there are high rents in apartments and it is an area where we need to have attention given to absentee landlords to make sure that as these high rents go up, the city, the people who are living in the housing benefit in terms of improved housing conditions also. The dotted areas indicate areas that might be attracted to absentee areas. They are areas that currently have low rents but where housing values went up during the 1960's. I think these are areas where we have to be particularly cautious in seeing that homeownership is maintained by encouraging families, the ones that are moving in, to buy, the ones that are there not to sell to absentee owners to stay and make sure that they feel satisfied with their community.

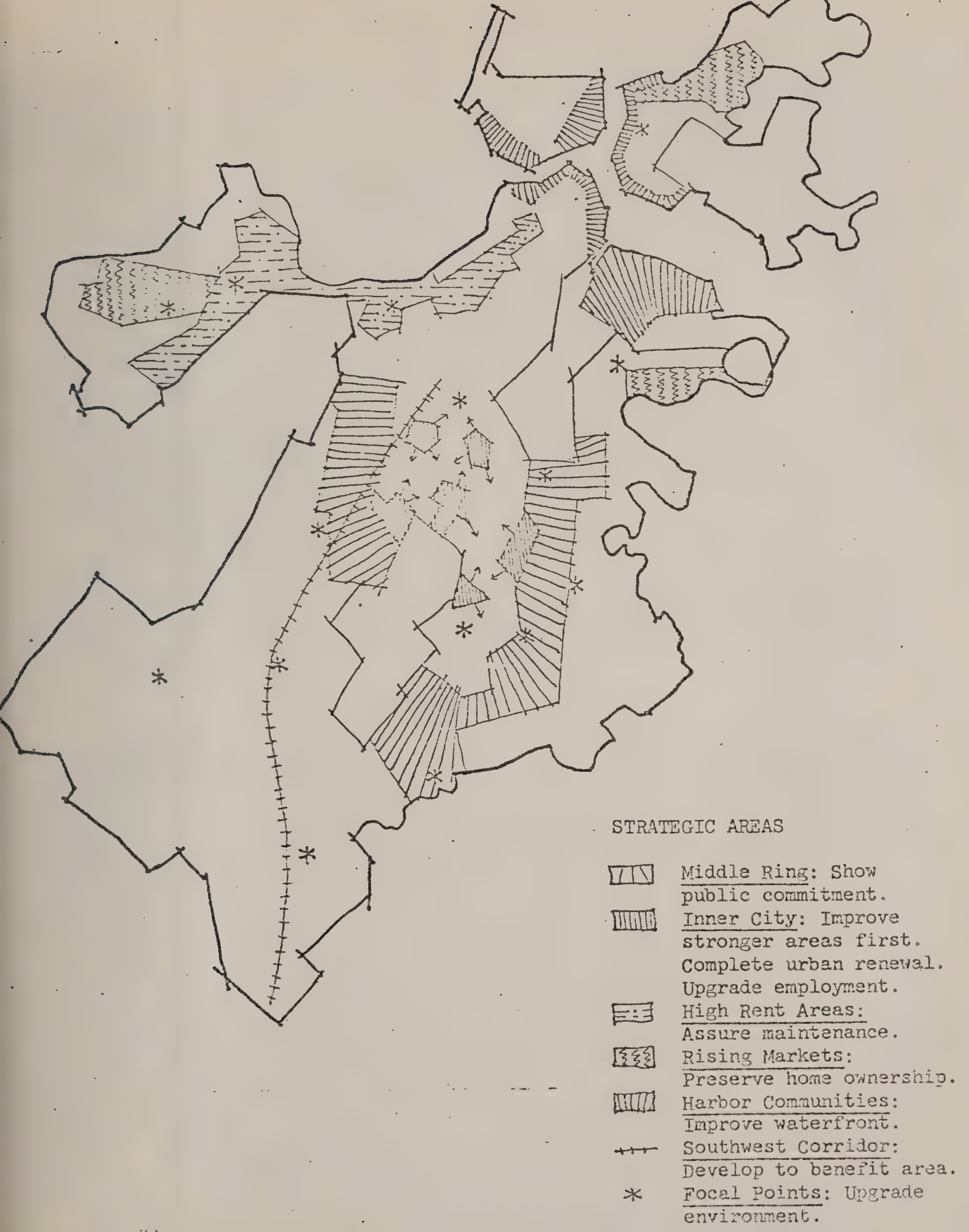
MAP #4



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

CONSERVATION
IMPROVEMENT
REVITALIZATION
COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
* AID TO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
URBAN RENEWAL AREA

MAP #5



STRATEGIC AREAS

▨ Middle Ring: Show public commitment.

▥ Inner City: Improve stronger areas first. Complete urban renewal. Upgrade employment.

▤ High Rent Areas: Assure maintenance.

≋ Rising Markets: Preserve home ownership.

▧ Harbor Communities: Improve waterfront.

+++ Southwest Corridor: Develop to benefit area.

* Focal Points: Upgrade environment.

INVESTMENT IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Over a third of the housing, office development and commercial, the investment is going to be going into the young areas; in fact, over half of the housing investment is going into the young area. It also should be noted that medical, higher educational investment is more spread out, it's going into a lot of different areas and particularly interesting are the major educational facilities that are going to be aimed at resident population as against the 1960's where most of the educational development was aimed at people who might be coming outside of the Boston Metropolitan area, I think that you have had a number of discussions about we expect over 100,000 new jobs in the Market in the 70's. The fact that this major educational investment will be aimed at the young residents of Boston means we hope that our young adults prepare for the kinds of jobs that are being made available nationally and in Boston.

Also along those lines is industrial development. Six months ago, there wasn't anything or there was very little, there were some kind of city-wide things that we knew about in the industrial development. Currently, we have added to that picture, we note that the Navy Yard in Boston will have industrial development, there are opportunities that E.D.I.C. is packaging to put together many industrial parks in a number of locations and as the southwest corridor plans get pulled together there are some visions that they're likely to include industrial development. That is going to also help the blue collar population. Of course, you have to remember that over two thirds of Bostons' employees are white collar employees.

On the public investment, these figures do not include a million and a half dollars going into areas that affect more than one area but what they do show is that in general the investment is spread out over most of the city, but it's somewhat lower in the inner suburbs than the outer suburban areas. This is something we want to address ourselves to and particularly to the inner suburbs and outer suburbs because these are areas where public investment are important to build confidence in those areas.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

Map # 5 is a sketchy diagram that highlights some of the areas that we think are strategic and need attention. The urban renewal areas need completion. The high rent apartment areas, need something like code enforcement to make sure that those rents go into good maintenance. Around U. Mass. and in the older Harbor areas we need to not only have code enforcement, but programs which will demonstrate the city's interest in those areas and make them attractive for families. I think in the paper that Lew just sent out to you he said, what will keep the 25 to 34 year olds stable in the neighborhoods that they choose to move into? One thing is that as they grow older they're going to be ready for schools and we need to be sure that schools in those areas are top notch.

Then around the area where there is black population, where there are changes in value--this area has over 40% of their homeowners who are elderly and it's an area that is very likely to change. It's very likely to have young families moving into it and those are areas where we also have to be sure that both the existing black population and the neighboring white populations have confidence in their areas. It's important that both of them do. The young blacks who have moved into these areas are very stable families. They have moderate, steady incomes. They're interested in the investment, if they're homeowners, that they've made in the housing there. The homeownership rate has held up well. We want to see those families make a commitment to their communities and I think that the organization of community groups in that area shows that the people there are very interested in commitment to the area.

In the model cities area, job training and some social programs are very important. The incomes in these areas are definitely lower than in the rest of Boston and in order to have improvement in housing and neighborhood conditions, it's extremely important that the incomes in those areas are improved. There are also stronger neighborhoods where if you're short on money, the way we always are it's a very wise investment to make sure that they are well maintained.

Within 5 to 10 years the Southwest corridor will become of a very important new development area in the City. The plans are in the early stage there.

Next week you're going to be getting into the discussion of housing policies; I haven't gone into that at all, but one of our major efforts has been a discussion of how to operate the tools that the city has to deal with; housing and policies for where upper and middle income housing should go; lower and moderate income housing and targets for the number of units; but since you'll be getting into that in the next session, I'll leave it until then.

A very important part of our program for planning for the neighborhoods is the capital improvements program and these charts #6,7,8 show capital and public facilities during the 1960's, 1967 and 1968 & '72, '73 to 82. The important thing to note is the large increase that is being projected in public improvements. Our planning has focused mainly on getting a handle on population projections, investment on housing policies, on capital improvements, on priorities for revenue sharing - there are a lot of things we haven't touched on which are equally important. Crime is a very important concern in stabilizing neighborhood schools and these are things that we hope to address ourselves to eventually.

Kirk O'Donnell: Thank you, Alex, Somebody introduced me here today as the Mayor's neighborhood man and I'll tell you I appreciated that because I'm usually introduced in the neighborhoods as the Mayor's man and that get's somewhat of a different reaction. I guess I am the neighborhood man and my credibility was immediately established by Mr. Emerson when he asked, Where do I live? Well, I live in Dorchester near Ashmont Station, (which I think since I moved there 2 yrs. ago showed a lot of good sense on my part.)

I have prepared some remarks to talk about the Little City Hall Programs in my role as the administrator of the program. Well, I do that all the time and I really don't think that's what we're here to talk about today. We're really here to talk about the City and the city's neighborhoods and not how I administer a Program to deal with those neighborhoods.

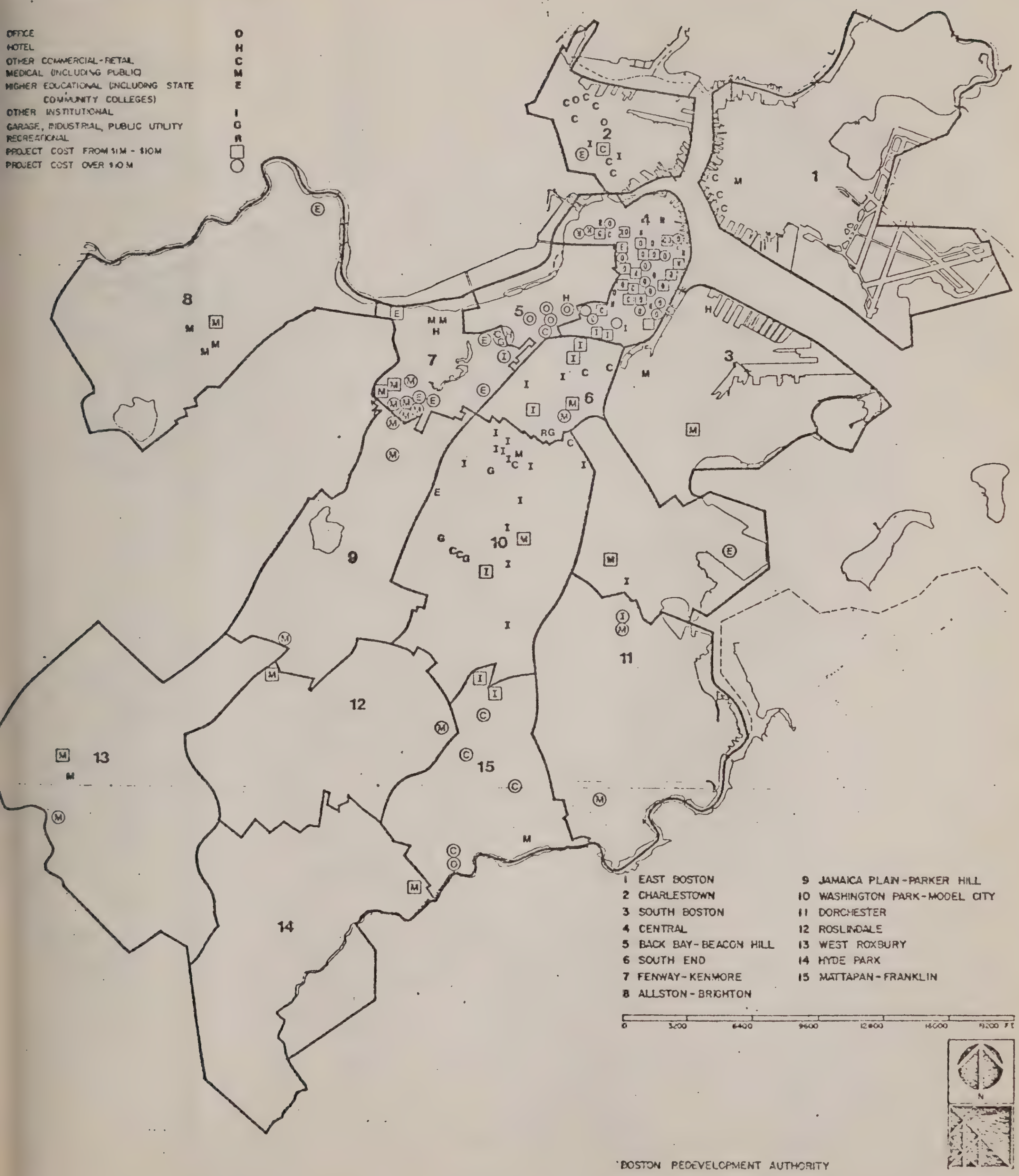
Boston reflects some problems; problems that really affect all the cities. Thomas Jefferson originally said when he put together what the country would be all about (he, more than anybody else did that, maybe with a little bit of set back in the Federalist Papers and the Constitution, and his arguments with Hamilton): when we get piled upon one another in large cities we shall become corrupt as they are in Europe. When the process of the American City began of bringing lower class people in the city, the reformers on the American scene in the late 19th Century were aghast. They were really aghast. They were aghast at the new class character of the city and what people were really looking for in the city and at the quality of city government. A. D. White would say: "the city governments in the U.S. were the worst than in christendom; the most expensive; the most inefficient and the most corrupt. .Josiah Strong, a social gospel reformer, would say the struggle for liberty in America has been a struggle to rest power from the one or the few and to lodge it with the many;" That is, to de-centralize government. The movement to centralize government by transferring power from the Council to the Mayor was a confession that popular government in our great cities had failed.

Beginning with his statement in the 1880's and leading up to 1951, the government of the City of Boston has been a progression of taking government away from the people-of ending democracy in the city. We come from the point in the 1880's where we had a cameral legislature with a weak executive to the point now where we have an at-large city council without any district representation that doesn't have the right to initiate legislation. It doesn't have the right to appropriate funds and that's not a legislature, not by any means.

We have a very strong Chief Executive. Now that's more efficient. Centralization is always more efficient. De-centralization should usually be more responsive. Just like the reformers in the 19th century didn't understand what the dynamics of the city were about, the same thing is reflected in us today. The Little City Hall Program is a response to that. The Little City Hall Program occurred in Boston because of Urban Renewal to a great extent.

MAP #6

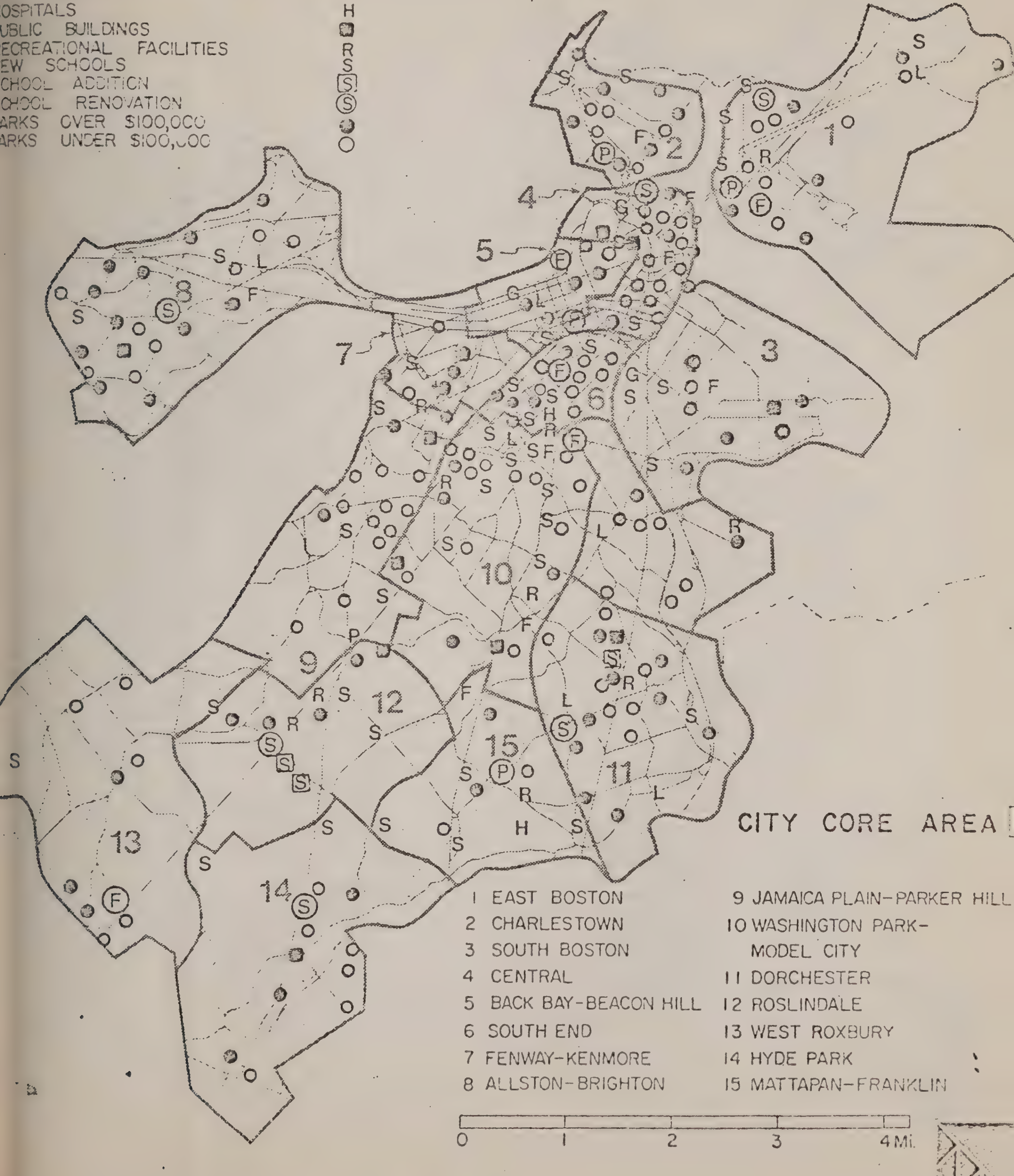
PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN BOSTON
UNDERWAY, PLANNED, PROPOSED
AS OF JANUARY, 1973


OFFICE O
HOTEL H
OTHER COMMERCIAL-RETAIL C
MEDICAL (INCLUDING PUBLIC) M
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL (INCLUDING STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGES) E
OTHER INSTITUTIONAL I
GARAGE, INDUSTRIAL, PUBLIC UTILITY G
RECREATIONAL R
PROJECT COST FROM $1M - $10M □
PROJECT COST OVER $10 M ○
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HILL
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY-KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK-MODEL CITY
11 DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN-FRANKLIN
0
3200
6400
9600
12800
16000
19200 FT
N
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

UBLIC FACILITIES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, CITY OF BOSTON
CHOOL CONSTRUCTION, PARK IMPROVEMENTS, AND OTHER FACILITIES
HE PROGRAM, 1973-1982

MAP # 7

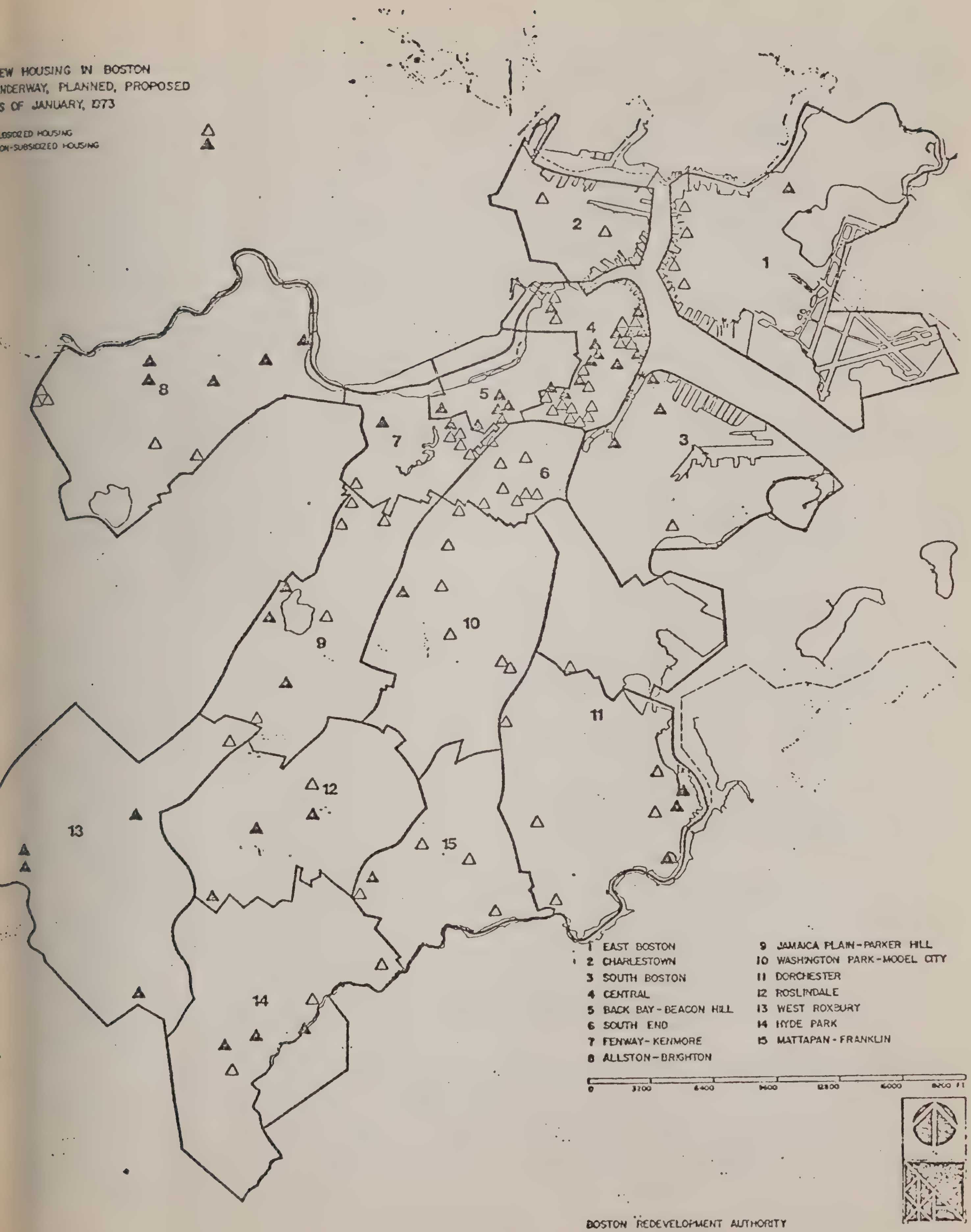
IBRARIES	L
IRE STATIONS	F
IRE STATION RENOVATION	Ⓕ
OLICE STATIONS	P
OLICE STATION RENOVATION	Ⓟ
ARAGES	G
OSPITALS	H
UBLIC BUILDINGS	■
ECREATIONAL FACILITIES	R
EW SCHOOLS	S
CHOOL ADDITION	🅂
CHOOL RENOVATION	Ⓢ
ARKS OVER $100,000	●
ARKS UNDER $100,000	○



1 EAST BOSTON	9 JAMAICA PLAIN–PARKER HILL
2 CHARLESTOWN	10 WASHINGTON PARK–MODEL CITY
3 SOUTH BOSTON	11 DORCHESTER
4 CENTRAL	12 ROSLINDALE
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HILL	13 WEST ROXBURY
6 SOUTH END	14 HYDE PARK
7 FENWAY-KENMORE	15 MATTAPAN–FRANKLIN
8 ALLSTON–BRIGHTON	

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MAP #8



EW HOUSING IN BOSTON
NDERWAY, PLANNED, PROPOSED
S OF JANUARY, 1973

BSIDIZED HOUSING △
ON-SUBSIDIZED HOUSING ▲
1 EAST BOSTON
2 CHARLESTOWN
3 SOUTH BOSTON
4 CENTRAL
5 BACK BAY-BEACON HILL
6 SOUTH END
7 FENWAY-KENMORE
8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
9 JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL
10 WASHINGTON PARK-MODEL CITY
11 DORCHESTER
12 ROSLINDALE
13 WEST ROXBURY
14 HYDE PARK
15 MATTAPAN-FRANKLIN
0
3200
6400
9600
12800
16000
19200 FT
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Kevin White was running against Edward D. Logue in 1967 and Logue was certainly unfairly labeled as a "downtown mayor". We did our best to label him with things like the West End. (The BRA always wonders why people won't forget the West End. The Emperor of Japan was wondering why the Americans wouldn't forget Pearl Harbor when he couldn't drop by the U.S. a few years ago. It's not going to be forgotten and it's a shame, but it's a reality that they have to deal with.)

Boston does not have three major avenues of political responsiveness. It doesn't have political parities; there's no place for the outs to be in. It doesn't have political machines; Curley destroyed those when he beat Honey Fitz. And it doesn't have district representation. So, the large geographic groups in this city have no representation. There are also large ethnic groups, running from blacks to what one would consider the native American Wasp who aren't represented on the city council. As a result of that there's a considerable alienation in Boston. Boston has the highest level of alienation of any city in the country, and this is by studies. I think it's a curious mixture really of the Puritan self-doubt and the Irish-Catholic legalism and sense of original sin which comes out to what Mark-Twain once said: "I'm going to speak to a Boston audience - 400 critics"

Beyond that cultural heritage, we are in a situation where the Mayor, in order to stay Mayor, made himself accountable in the neighborhoods. Now Mel King calls it the "illusion of inclusion" and he's right. It's not community control. We had a real identity crisis in Little City Halls because we organized community groups against neighborhoods. We went out and we felt that if we organized a community group we were representatives to the city. So we went out and organized a community group and tell the Mayor don't build any low-cost housing in Dorchester and then he wonders why he ever put a Little City Hall out there.

We didn't understand the essential dynamics of what the city was all about. We changed; the Mayor got political, he got a hold of me, (I was a teacher outside of Fall River and involved in his Governor's campaign) and I really feel that the roles of Little City Halls is as a part of the Mayor's decision of making process: that he is accountable in a neighborhood. For anything this administration does in the neighborhood (and I was the Little City Hall Manager in Fields Corner in a particularly vulnerable position.) You know there's someone whose going to be responsible.

We are part of the input into that decision making process. The Mayor says that he's going to build elderly housing in Lower Mills in Dorchester and it's going to be 15 stories high. I have to tell him that the people of Dorchester around that area don't want that. But I understand it when he said the elderly people of the city need this, so it will be built. That's really the difference; between city government and town government. Town government is essentially anti-metropolitan-exclusionary- and it's self-governing. The city is not self-governing.

The role of the Little City Halls and what I fight for is that the manager's become part of the Mayor's decision-making policy. That just doesn't go to the Mayor. That goes to the capital budget process in the city; Who would know in this building that there's a significant black population around Franklin Field that's Haitian and they don't want a golf course, they want cricket courts. That's the kind of thing that comes out of the Little City Hall Program. Because you're accountable in that neighborhood, you can not ignore when an institution or university arrives in the neighborhood.

Now I have an office seven floors up with secretaries, doors, and a view of the Harbor and you know, I don't have to answer the phone calls, but I have to answer those people who would walk into my office and say: "What are you going to do about that institution?" Freddie Salvucci in East Boston had to answer those people on Neptune Rd. who said: "What are you going to do about those airplanes?" The guys from the South End to Hyde Park were accountable to the people about the highway and what were we going to do about that?

We are part of the process in various decision-making processes in the city that occur below the Mayor's level. That gets us into the presentation today. When I revamped my research and planning in the Little City Halls, I brought in all systems analysts. But someone once said the problem with McNamara's analysis of the Vietnam War was that systems analysts want to build a heirarchy of importance, that which is measurable is very important, that which is difficult to measure is less important and that which is non-measurable is un-important. And I really feel that in working at the presentation that there's a lack in the analysis of the neighborhoods here, both in the presentation and the discussion paper which I just read the BRA's view of a first to go out and find out what is important to making importance in terms of measuring. Why is the population growth something to be excited about? Why is the rise of higher income people in the city something to be excited about? When you measure that there will be a decline in the black migration in the South, is that bad or good? "Transitional neighborhood," what kind of a concept is that? If any neighborhood is good, it's in transition.

This doesn't get down into measuring what the people in the city are actually thinking and the only way you do that is to get out there, be in that neighborhood. I think that the kinds of deceptions that occur that I get from talking to some of you people in the room is the view of the city from driving the main streets. Well main streets in the city have become like railroad lines in the 19th century. No one wants to live on a main arterial highway. The view of Dorchester is not the Sidney St. 3-decker that are across from the Globe, though even that's deceiving.

Sidney Street is deceiving, things aren't as bad as they look from the back porch That's not what the city's about. I really feel that to understand what the city's about I think you have to have a larger role in the historical sense of the city and that might be my basic answer. I sound very, anti-intellectual or sound anti-measurement. I was never very good at measurement, I always flunked Math and didn't do too well in Sciences, but you know, I like to think of myself as a humanist. What the city is about is what the German expression was when cities were re-introduced in Medieval times- the air of the city is free. The city is a social and economic ladder for different dise franchised classes. Most of the views of the American Revolution are that it was not brought about by ruled and battled farmers. It was brought about by an urban merchant class represented by the likes of John Hancock and Samuel Adams and people like that; an urban merchant class that was threatened of being disenfranchised by the English Gentry and the King reversing the policies of salutary neglect.

The city's real role and the role of this city is as a social and economic ladder. The role of the neighborhoods is that they are observable to the person who lives in the neighborhood. When my Grandmother landed in the North End and my father was born in Roxbury and brought up in Jamaica Plain and I was brought up in West Roxbury, there was a social progression. There was an economic progression. The cities are the agents in this country as well as any other country of the growth of capitalism; the growth of those people who are the disenfranchised. And they are not always disenfranchised because of economic reasons. My landlord in Dorchester is a Lithuwanian Refugee who moved to South Boston and works in a factory, was a Professor of Latin Lithuwania and has now moved out to Dorchester and fortunately, does not want to move to Milton.

In that sense neighborhoods have to change in really two ways. In the map here of the Urban Dynamics Lines show Beacon Hill and the North End. Beacon Hill goes like this and the North End goes like that. Well, I think the North End's a better neighborhood for the city. Why do I think it, well it was a place where by Grandmother could land. There are two factors in the neighborhood. One is that the neighborhood either has to serve that kind of role that when someone moves from one neighborhood to the next neighborhood, that they are not despairing of the process of living in the city, that they know they're making progress. They know that they're overcoming the greatest crisis that we face and that is confidence in the future of the city. When a black family moves out of lower Roxbury to Roxbury Highlands and eventually gets into Mattapan, that should show that they're moving on a social and economic scale.

Now the second factor is the factor of a neighborhood changing in terms of people within the neighborhood changing. Within neighborhoods if there's a decision that a neighborhood be upgraded, it should not be upgraded by the fact that 25 and 34 year old sons and daughters of suburbanite families who are going to college move in. But there is a significant upgrading of the people who live in that neighborhood and for one reason or another they decide not to move along that social and economic ladder. The sort of un-slumming that went on in the No. End and the sort of un-slumming that would have gone on in the West End should occur in that neighborhood.

That also was an extremely healthy process and I really feel from driving around the city that these profits of doom are being proven wrong. There is process ocurring. Mattapan, for example, once----and the end of it around St. Angeles Parish got together is indeed staying as a middle-class neighborhood. It's going to be all black, but it's going to be middle-class. It won't be like Roxbury Highlands down to Morton St. Wellington Hill is being middle-class and I think that that's important, there's not much of a difference from Francis Russell's article in the National Review about what Blue Hill Avenue was like when he lived there and the native Americans were moving out.

I think that's vital and I think in terms of my view what we're dealing with in the city and what we're threatened by with in the city is the prosperity in the city. There wasn't a lot of movement in terms of population for a long time in the city because there wasn't a lot of economic opportunity. We don't have as many black people as other cities, because we didn't have the economic opportunity in the city. It wasn't a healthy, vital growing city. Between 1860 and 1960 it was a city marked by economic stagnation and not really real growth, now it's growth. I think that what we should know and be aware of is that we need the change. The change is good; the change is good in the city and it should occur. I would be worried if blacks stopped moving here from the South, I really would, I'd wonder why they did, because you know, their initial reasons for moving in are very, very good.

I feel just to end it up is that we face some real problems in terms of whether the North End will take on the character of the waterfront. People in this administration, in the Mayor's Office, are all moving into the North End. I think that Charlestown faces some real problems, some real problems in terms of its change in character. I think there's real problems as we all know in Brighton and in Allston in terms of whose going to live there. And surprisingly enough the BRA is taking over sections of Dorchester, Ashmont Hill is becoming a preserve of the Redevelopment Authority planners, moving into the Victorian Houses. I moved in, I displaced a working class Irish family in Dorchester.

The city is too prosperous and really for the good of those people who should prosper from the city and we put out artificial controls like Rent Control so that we control that prosperity. I think in terms of looking at the city in terms of its housing stock, in terms of that which is observable and measurable can be most deceiving. I really think that the problems that we do face are the problems of prosperity not decline.

Eli Post: I want to make reference to the point about the analyst who said we focused on issues we can measure rather than the important things. He touched on a very important point, one that Alex and I have talked about very much. I think it was Krushchev who said that "If a pig had wings it could fly." The BRA is like a little fat pig, full of data, numbers and charts, but we don't quite have wings and we can't get ourselves off the ground. We can't launch the kind of program and response that they would imply. We talked about black migration, student migration or changes in higher rents, lower rents and on and on and on, but we don't get an answer. That's not the point of the data. The point of the data is not to tell you what we're doing and not to tell you about the solution but to give a systematic approach for solving problems. This purpose is to provide a sufficient data so that the city can identify the points of leverage and act affirmatively in those cases. Either this year or next near the Congress is going to pass Community Revenue Sharing legislation that would change the whole character of urban funding.

In the absence of this kind of systematic approach, the city will not be in a position to decide how those scarce funds are spent. It appears now that in Boston they get something like $60 to $81 million for the next 3 or 4 yrs. to use either for code enforcment or vocational training or urban renewal or the like and it's important to have----today as a basis for existing, otherwise you're going to get a reputation of----that bear no relationship to the kinds of changes that are occuring in the city today.

Lew Alfeld: Well, I'm not sure that I have anything to add to what I think was a very excellent presentation by Kirk O'Donnell on the kind of problems that I am still struggling with myself in trying to identify what is a neighborhood like. The preliminary paper that I wrote was a first attempt of struggling with this question of what causes changes in neighborhoods. What is the role of a neighborhood? How does it operate? Why does it change? We call that in Urban Dynamics a structural question. What is the structure of the system that is causing changes? I think that the only way that we're going to get to those answers is to listen to people like Kirk O'Donnell, who know what neighborhoods are and who have a perception of neighborhood change and can identify why certain things occur.

I might differ with what I might have interpreted from the jist of the Eli Post's comment that the data helps you find the leverage points in the System. I think it's understanding the local neighborhoods that helps you find the leverage points, but the data then can be very useful in determining which of those leverage points you need operate or push today and which ones tomorrow and which ones maybe 10 yrs. from now and which ones you want to leave alone entirely. We're still a long way, I think, all of us, in finding any concrete answers. But we're at least beginning to realize that the system is a great deal more complex than we might have imagined 10 yrs. ago and that it's going to require a lot of analysis to find out what we really can do and are capable of doing and to try to build things.

Dun Gifford: I'd like to put in a good word for the BRA and its presentation and what seems to me an increasing sophistication of fact-gathering and fact-analysis capacity. It's always helpful to me and I'm sure to the rest of us here to have no. 1 the knowledge produced by the BRA available and no. 2 to know that if the knowledge is available to whoever it is who is making policy on capital budget allocations on the BRA target priority areas and so on. That's an impressive piece of work, Alex, and I think that you and your group ought to know that one member of the real estate fraternity thinks so.

Donald Stone: (Commerce & Manpower) I can't share Kirk's great suspicion with numerical measurement, although I think he said something that is perhaps not completely stressed as much as it should be and that is that there's probably a strong difference in the expectations of those who are in the system that's being planned, as compared to those who are planning the system. He said it rather nicely when he asked: What difference does it make that income groups may be moving from one part of the city to the other.

I heard recently that there was a strong difference in the output of the school system here in Boston in terms of college placement; much lower college placement than in a city such as Brookline. The person who was giving me that information was interpreting it in a negative way and saying well, you know, we've got to do something to get this placement up. From my own origins and backgroudn, I would say the same thing. But, both he and I are imposing their own values on it and in accordance with the expectations of those who are using it. It may be that because of the working class and lower income and minority group concentrations in the school system, the parents of the school system really don't impose that expectation upon their children. I realize the economic implications of a school system that puts out 75% of its students that perhaps immediately enter the labor force as opposed to one in which the students go on to higher training and enter the occupational ladder at a higher level.

I think what Kirk says is particularly important for the excellent work that the BRA is doing that these trends can be seen and trends can be obtained, but interpreting these trends always conotes some kind of value judgement attached to it. I just found it very refreshing to see the fact stressed that there is a difference in the city between those who live in the neighborhood and what their expectations are and perhaps those who come to work in the city and make decisions in the city, but are not a part of that kind of system.

Kirk O'Donnell: I'd like to respond to that. First of all I have nothing against the whole collection of data, I don't think that the data is useless; by no means, what I say is what you ended up with. The conclusions drawn by the data are drawn by people who have middle class prejudices, all right. Most of the planners in the BRA are middle-class planners and the BRA is a middle and upper-class institution so that when they see wealthy people moving into the city they assume that is a good thing. It's the conclusions I'm objecting to not the data. That is the reason the BRA gave me a bomb as a gift one day, really it was a 250-pounder.

You point to institutional growth and where the kids from Boston go to school. That was a problem I faced immediately as a Little City Hall manager. From everything that was observable when U. Mass. was going to move to Columbia Point everybody assumed that there would be a housing crisis. But I was brought up in the city and I remember there used to be an opera house opposite Northeastern. Many wanted us to build dormitories. I remember the opera house went down and they built a dormitory. When they built the dormitory it didn't solve the student problem, it caused a student problem, and there are a lot of reasons for that.

I also thought of all my friends from So. Boston and Dorchester who went to Boston College. There's a reason why B. U. and Northeastern and B. C. are along trolly lines and my basic view toward U. Mass. was that a housing problem is like a lot of housing problems, the result of another factor. If Suffolk University wouldn't turn over Beacon Hill then possibly U. Mass. won't turn over Dorchester and how do they avoid that. Well they do that by not becoming like U. Mass. in Amherst, which has 2/3rds of the student body from 1/3rd of the top income group in this state and by being sure the working class people in the city have the opportunity. They have the desire to go to college, but they don't have the Board scores and the Board scores are very, very arbitrary and very relative. The experiment with C.C.N.Y. showed to a degree that ethnics would want to go to universities, if U. Mass.,Boston continued to educate 50% of their students from the lower income classes. There will not be a housing crisis. Mark Twain once said that "of course, every student wants to go away to school and so do his parents want him to go away to school." But the economic realities were not there and we worked and I think it's to the great, great credit of Eli and working for the Columbia Point Plan that we work in a cooperative effort with the University and with the community under the most difficult of circumstances. It looks like not only will there be a great change in the University, but it might bring changes in that entire area.

My basic point is that these people are drawing conclusions. I see my job as to go to the people about who the conclusions are being drawn and find out what they think.

Judy Weirs: Just some comments about what one survey of people found and what people want in the community. A year ago Boston Urban Observatory did a survey of 500 residents in the city and over 60% in most of the communities were satisfied with their communities in general when they were asked what kinds of improvements you'd like to see in your neighborhood. The basic answer in most of the neighborhoods was we want renovation, fix-up, beautification, that kind of thing.

When asked about what sort of improved services people would like from the city they pointed to police protection. Schools were important in West Roxbury. In most of the other areas people were pretty satisfied. In the inner city people were distinctly dis-satisfied with the schools. And that's sort of a picture of what people think right now about their area.

The End of Meeting, Adjourned

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alex Ganz

FROM: Frederick Pikielek

DATE: December 12, 1973

SUBJECT: Planning for Boston's Neighborhoods

I think the basic flaw with the current neighborhood plan is too much comparing of apples with oranges. This is immediately apparent when you look at the classifications of neighborhoods.

Older Neighborhoods - refers to housing stock
Young Singles, Young Married and Elderly - refers to social composition
Inner City Neighborhoods - appears to be racial composition
Neighborhoods in Transition - refers to racial change
Suburban Type Neighborhoods - refers to housing stock.

The classifications, whether made on the basis of housing stock, social composition or racial change should be of the same type for all the neighborhoods; otherwise, comparison becomes difficult if not impossible. Perhaps all the neighborhoods could have been grouped by the predominant type of housing stock, or racial characteristic, or economic characteristic.

Although pp. 3-4 give the reasons for classifying Boston's neighborhoods into five major types because of similarities in socio-economic characteristics, history and needs, many of the neighborhoods are either mislabeled or do not fit into their particular category. The most notable example is putting South Dorchester in with Charlestown, South Boston and the North End and then stating (p. 26 "...are sharing in the growing attractiveness of living close to the center of the activity.....proximity to the Waterfront".

In terms of priority to the City Core, the South End is closer than East Boston, South Boston, Charlestown and South Dorchester, yet it has been classified as an "Inner City Neighborhood" along with Washington Park. This arbitrary classification tends to pull it down statistically speaking in comparison to the other areas.

Since these classifications are purely arbitrary, perhaps they could have been made in terms of existing housing stock. If this were done, the classification "row house" neighborhood could be used for South Boston, East Boston and Charlestown, since the wooden frame row house type predominates there and "brownstone" neighborhood for Back Bay/Beacon Hill and the South End.

Although some statistics do not seem to bear this up, the rents for a renovated brownstone in the South End approximate more closely those in Back Bay/Beacon Hill than those in Charlestown, South Boston and East Boston where the rent is lower. (A look at the Sunday Real Estate Section would quickly confirm this.) It must also be remembered that the South End contains nearly a thousand units of public housing out of a 10,000 units listed in the '70 Census and this would tend to lower the average rent.

On page 32, the report states homeownership in the Area as low. While this is true, however, no mention is made of home ownership figures in the Young Singles, Married and Elderly, which is probably lower than the South End. As a point of information, the percentage of owner occupancy has increased in the South End in the last ten years. Another reason for the lower homeowner occupancy might be the higher prices for building in the South End, than in any other district except for Back Bay/Beacon Hill.

The price trends tables in the back of the report do not correspond to the information presented in the text. Page 23 states in reference to Back Bay/Beacon Hill, young marrieds, etc., neighborhoods "the influx of new residents gave property values the highest annual rate of increase in the City-7.49-during the 60's. Yet, when one looks at the tables, especially on page 53 and page 55, both Charlestown and the South End far outstrip the young singles neighborhoods, but no mention is made of the tremendous increase in value of South End properties. Again the lumping of the South End with Washington Park, where property values declined, has pulled down the South End.

Page 31 of the report states of the Inner City neighborhoods: "The area has also changed from almost all non-white in 1950 to only 29% non-white in 1970. Just the reverse is true. In the 1950's, Washington Park was predominantly white, but by 1970 had become predominantly black. On the other hand, the South End, which in 1950 had 43.4% of the total non-white population of the City and in 1970 had only 10.3% of the total.

Another "apples and oranges" situation exists on page 32 in reference to the Inner City neighborhoods - "Less than 10% of the City's college-educated reside in the area." Page 27, referring to the older neighborhoods says "while 28% of the City's population live in these communities, only 15% of the City's college educated do." Why not a similar comparison for the inner-city neighborhoods which, if stated, would say while 14.1% of the City's population live in these communities(Inner City), less than 10% (9.4%) of the City's college-educated do. Such a comparison would enable the reader to make the further comparison that proportionately, people in the Inner City neighborhoods are better educated than those in the older neighborhoods.

Also, on page 27, the information is inaccurate, in that it should read "While 28% of the City's population 25 and over....".

I would also take exception to the recommended goals for the Inner City neighborhoods, especially the South End as being urban renewal project completion and neighborhood stabilization and population Strategy for older neighborhoods and the suburban neighborhoods seems much more spelled out. If, on the one hand, there has been an influx of young marrieds and professionals into the South End and an increasing desirability, as evidenced by skyrocketing real estate prices, should the city encourage the building of more low income housing just because it was part of the plan? If the area as stated on page 32 still has the City's highest density and the South End has the greatest lack of open

space, how is extensive new construction justified if the emphasis is placed on multiple bedroom units?

In conclusion, while it might be desirable to group Boston's neighborhoods, such grouping should be consistent and across the board so that comparisons might be easily made.

I think a study which affords the same basis of comparison to other neighborhood groupings will not only read better, but be a far more valuable resource tool in understanding these neighborhoods.

/c

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO Alex Ganz

FROM Philip Zeigler

DATE December 19, 1973

UBJECT FRED PIKIELEK'S MEMO OF DECEMBER 12

With interest, I have just completed reading Fred's memo on Neighborhood Planning. Fred's observations on conflicting statements in the report, inaccuracies, etc. are certainly useful and should be considered carefully when the document is revised and refined through further planning efforts.

As a note to add to Fred's memo, I have had considerable criticism from the Planning Staff on the manner in which various neighborhoods of the City were grouped in the report. The majority of the comments seem to be based on the Planners' feelings that many of the community groups they work with would be irritated, if not outraged, over being combined with other neighborhoods that they feel are quite different from theirs. I have stressed repeatedly that the typology analysis is very generalized and was carried out solely for the purpose of gaining a quick and better understanding of major characteristics and changes taking place in Boston; and, for this purpose, it is a useful and convenient tool.

However, we might well want to consider this in more detail in terms of the ensuing neighborhood planning efforts.

PZ/ed

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alex Ganz and Frederick Pikielek

FROM: Barbara Dumke

DATE: December 26, 1973

SUBJECT: Planning for Boston's Neighborhoods

Just a few comments about the questions raised in Fred's memorandum of December 12, 1973. First, the dialogue reflected in Fred's memo is healthy and vital both to the individuals who worked on the report and to the planning effort itself. Continuation of such dialogue must be encouraged. Second, the focus which the memo emphasized is for a consistent and congruent basis for the classification of Boston's neighborhoods into various groupings. I support this statement but assert that the neighborhood typology as currently organized is a valid classification of neighborhoods as a whole.

The classification is based on the similarities in neighborhood socio-economic characteristics, environmental and physical structures, and public and private outlays for capital construction. The particular names ascribed to the different types only serve to identify one unique characteristic of those neighborhoods. It is the differences in these names, and not the differences between the common characteristics, that can give the impression that the neighborhoods were organized arbitrarily and on differential bases. However, every typology will necessarily encompass a few exceptions and it is these exceptions which should be noted and explained in order to keep the classification system intact. Hence, one of the shortcomings of the neighborhood development report was that it did not point out the important differences within some of the types. Future reports will make these distinctions.

Initially, I composed a detailed explanation justifying the validity of this neighborhood typology. This explanation noted the similarities as well as the differences in the neighborhoods' past and future growth patterns. A variety of factors were discussed:

1. Shifts in the neighborhood's social structures (resident population, families and unrelated individuals, age and race, income and education, and occupational composition of the labor force);

2. Shifts in the neighborhood's physical structures (housing, new construction, rehabilitation needs, residential property value changes);

3. Shifts in the investment priorities (capital outlays for public facilities and construction in the private sectors); and

4. Shifts in the neighborhood's environment (density, open space).

I will share this analysis with those interested in this particular issue.

More important to me and to the entire neighborhood and city-wide planning effort, however, is to focus on more basic issues and concerns. Fred touched on this aspect by stating his disagreement with the "recommended goals for the Inner City neighborhoods, especially the South End as being an urban renewal project completion neighborhood and population stabilization." He further questioned whether the City should encourage the building of more low income housing and the new construction of multiple bedroom units. I think these questions of the neighborhoods' future growth and the City's program for encouraging such growth are essential. If the neighborhood typology concept were abandoned, we would still be left with the individual neighborhoods and all the goals and strategies which we have identified. The task remains to thoroughly examine such targets -- in light of their social and economic implications and their underlying assumptions. The task remains to compare and modify such targets with other groups who are responsible for neighborhood planning and development: the district planners, the Little City Hall managers, the community citizens' groups, etc. We must consider just how valid our set of growth targets are. For whom are we planning this City? The white middle class orientation of these development goals must deal more directly with certain social problems, such as manpower upgrading of the unskilled, racial tensions, improvement of the lower income classes, etc. By incorporating targets and strategies for improving such social problems, the City can develop a more representative and fair program for growth in the 1970's.

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO Alex Ganz

FROM John Weis

DATE December 18, 1973

UBJECT Designation of Dorchester Planning District into two segments.

I would like to suggest that the Research Department drop the North and South or even 1 and 2, Dorchester designation. This is based on the following:

First, "North" Dorchester - so named by the B.R.A. has come to mean "black" Dorchester. This has problems politically but, moreover, statistically since North Dorchester has only 11.7% black - more than 2% of which is comprised by Columbia Point which heavily weights North Dorchester by comprising 18% of the total population.

Second, There appears to be no rationale, geographically or politically for this distinction. If, in fact, it was for statistical purposes I would imagine something closer to a 50-50 total population split would be more appropriate instead of the 3 to 1 - south to north. There is, really, very little difference between both areas, save that northern Dorchester has more institutional and industrial uses.

The District Planning Program has not used the term for over a year and I don't think there is a statistical advantage in the breakdown. What we have found to be far more useful is to break our data down into "neighborhoods" which we believe give us data which is more informative and useful.

I would also like to disagree with the designation of North Dorchester as a "Transition" Neighborhood and South Dorchester as an "older" Neighborhood. Both sections are in transition and northern Dorchester was settled much before southern Dorchester. Much of the area in the Cedar Grove Lower Mills and Ashmont sections in Southern Dorchester are characterized by early suburban and post World War II housing styles.

In general, I see little value in lumping neighborhoods into Inner City (meaning black I presume since Back Bay was not included) or Older or Transitional. Doing this creates problems to neighborhoods which consider themselves unique.

B/702

cc: Philip Zeigler
Director of Planning

alex -
here is another!
Phil

CITY
HALLS

Kevin H. White, Mayor

November, 1973

LITTLE CITY HALLS FACT SHEET

COMPONENTS

The program now includes:

- --fifteen fully staffed Little City Halls and two substations covering the entire City of Boston.
- --a 24-hour complaint and information center located in City Hall itself.
- --a central administrative and research staff.

GOALS

The major goals of the program are to:

- --provide direct services and information to the public.
- --respond to complaints.
- --act as the Mayor's representative in the neighborhoods.
- --encourage citizen participation and serve as a catalyst in neighborhood projects.
- --improve delivery of city services through coordination of line department personnel and through recommendations for departmental change.

SERVICES

Among the services provided by the Little City Halls are:

- --response to citizen complaints.
- --rent control information and assistance.
- --sewer, water, property tax, and motor vehicle excise collections
- --tax abatement applications and information.
- --rent control information and assistance.
- --notarization of documents.
- --marriage, birth, and death records.
- --certified copies of housing inspection reports
- --consumer protection services.
- --applications for civil service and public housing.
- --veterans assistance.
- --voter registration and applications for absentee ballots.
- --social security assistance (at specified times).
- --federal income tax preparation assistance (at specified times).

WORKLOAD CHARACTERISTICS

About 10,000 calls or visits are made to the Little City Halls each week. Only one out of every four items of business involves a complaint. Requests for information or for services directly available through the Halls are the primary source of business. In the period July 1, 1971 through June 30, 1972, for example:

--23,616 people registered to vote in Little City Halls.
--17,458 bills were paid, resulting in collections of over $3,000,000.
--3,321 applications for abatements were received.

The pattern of complaints has remained relatively constant over the past five years. However, there has been an increasing effort to handle complaints at the local level through daily contact between the Little City Halls and line department field personnel. As a result, there has been a decrease in departmental response time on several types of routine complaint.

Approximately 40% of the complaints directed to Little City Halls concern housing and related residential matters -- inadequate building maintenance, lack of heat and hot water, vermin, and other violations of the State Sanitary Code. An important part of the Little City Hall's job, in this as in other areas, is to make sure problems are exactly identified so that they can be routed to the correct enforcement agencies without loss of time.

The next largest category of complaints involve public works problems, including trash collection, street cleaning, road repairs, catch basins, sewer and water line defects, and so on. The remainder of the complaints which come to the Little City Halls are enormously varied, from those concerning noise problems to stray animals to the behavior of the neighbors. While many problems are appropriately referred to other agencies, it is Little City Hall policy never to refuse a complaint or request on the ground that "That is not our responsibility."

MANAGERS' ACTIVITIES

In addition to supervising the day-to-day work of their staffs, Little City Hall managers spend a great deal of time in the community and at community meetings. Each manager, at any one time, will be involved in a variety of projects and issues which he has assured himself are important to the neighborhood. Among recent concerns of Little City Hall managers have been:

--controlling airport noise and airport encroachment on a residential area.
--coordinating city resources to upgrade a local shopping district.
--working with other agencies to calm tensions in a public housing project.

PERSONNEL

There are approximately 110 employees on the payroll. Of these, more than 85 serve in the field. With a very few exceptions, employees are non-civil service. More than 90% live in Boston, and it is Little City Hall policy to encourage all employees to become residents of the city they serve. Twenty-five percent are bilingual or polylingual. (Spanish and Italian predominate, while French, Chinese, Greek and Arabic are also spoken.) Members of racial minorities acount for a quarter of all personnel, while the background of employees is about equally divided among business, social service, and government.

A typical Little City Hall is staffed by a manager, assistant manager, one or more service coordinators, and a secretary-receptionist. In addition, Little City Halls have the help of such non-city paid personnel as senior aides, social security and IRS officials, and student and other volunteers. A number of line department employees are either based in Little City Halls or call in on a regular basis.

COST OF THE PROGRAM

YEAR	LITTLE CITY HALLS	SUMMER WORK**	TOTAL
1968*	$ 272,933	$--------	$ 272,933
1969	810,688	56,107	866,795
1970	1,086,905	121,390	1,208,295
1971	811,179	178,357	1,148,618***
1972	1,222,398	182,550	1,404,948
1973	1,202,398	20,000	1,222,398

* six months.

** 1969-1972 figures represent Little City Hall portion of city monies spent to equip and supervise federally funded Neighborhood Youth Corps workers. 1973 figure represents a limited program entirely controlled by Little City Halls personnel.

*** Differential made up by Model Cities Administration funding (six months).

PUBLIC RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE

A survey done for the National League of Cities in 1970 showed a high recognition of the program's existence and a positive attitude toward it on the part of those who had used the Little City Halls (more than 20% of all Boston households at that time).

A Becker poll taken for the Boston Globe one year later sampled feelings about the Little City Halls in every one of Boston's major neighborhoods. Of those interviewed, 71% wanted to see the program continued, with 35% satisfied with the Little City Halls as they were and 36% wanting to see them strengthened.

National recognition of the program continues to increase, accelerated during the past year by articles in Parade Magazine and U.S. News & World Report, and by the publication of an academic analysis by Professor Eric Nordlinger titled Decentralizing the City: A Study of Boston's Little City Halls (MIT Press).

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The creation of the Office of Public Service (the administrative entity responsible for the Little City Halls) fulfilled a campaign promise made by Kevin White in the summer of 1967. During his first candidacy for mayor, White issued a position paper calling for a "neighborhood service department" to deal with problems of communication between city government and the people.

In part, White's proposal represented a response to the Kerner Commission Report -- which was itself a response to the urban riots of the mid-sixties. However, the proposal addressed a larger issue of "citizen alienation" which was common to white as well as black neighborhoods and especially pronounced in Boston.

Among the factors cited as reasons for the high level of alienation in Boston were:

- --urban renewal which made reconstruction of the downtown areas its chief priority and which dislocated many lower middle class and lower class residents in its neighborhood programs.
- --a general municipal neglect of the majority of the older residential areas, with a steady decline in services and facilities.
- --an "at large" city council system which tended to deny neighborhood residents direct participation in city politics.

While these factors contributed to a negative attitude toward city government on the part of many residents, they also provided a natural setting for a program as emphatically neighborhood oriented as the Little City Halls turned out to be.

Shortly after his election in November of 1967, Mayor White asked an advisory group including two prominent academics, a former state representative, a city councillor, and a black architect active in community affairs to draw up specific proposals for the new neighborhood service department. Their preparatory work included interviews with those involved in New York City's "little city hall" program and also drew on the "state service center" concept in California.

The Mayor's first step toward "bringing city government back to the people" was to establish a 24-hour complaint and information center shortly after his inauguration. He followed this by creating the Office of Public Service through executive order in March of 1968. To head the office, he appointed Daniel Finn, former commissioner of the Department of Housing Inspection.

The first Little City Hall was opened in East Boston on July 25, 1968. This initial facility was a demounted trailer, located in the major shopping and transportation center of Maverick Square. (Inspired to some extent by branch banks, all the Little City Halls are placed as nearly as possible "where people go on their daily business.")

By the end of 1968, three more trailers and five offices in underutilized municipal buildings had been opened. Of the facilities in operation today, three are located in trailers, seven in municipal buildings, and seven in store fronts or other commercial space.

At the outset, several key decisions were made that have shaped the program ever since. Among them were that:

--Little City Halls would be city-wide in scope, serving all of Boston's neighborhoods, rather than concentrated in poverty areas.
--Little City Halls would be locally financed, to avoid dependence on uncertain federal funding and also to free the program from possibly irrelevant federal guidelines.
--Little City Halls would encourage maximum citizen use and would participate extensively in neighborhood projects and issues, but would not be available for community control.
--Little City Halls would use the knowledge gained through responding to complaints and demands to suggest means for improving the delivery of city services.

In 1969-70 attempts were made to set up "local advisory councils" which would function, with the Little City Halls, as a primary voice for neighborhood concerns in the central decision-making process. With a few exceptions, the experiment failed, largely because it did not take into account the many active and effective civic groups already operating in the neighborhoods. Informal relationships between community groups and the Little City Halls have nevertheless grown stronger over the years, reflecting the great diversity of interests and social structures in Boston's neighborhoods.

In September, 1969, the Mayor named David Davis, former budget director, as the second head of the Office of Public Service. Davis saw the program as a tool for bringing about departmental change and concentrated on establishing links between the Little City Halls and those line departments whose operation the Halls had come to know best.

The program's third director, Edward Dwyer, previously with the General Electric Company, devoted himself to making direct services

more efficient. No new programs were adopted in 1971, primarily because of an austerity budget imposed on all city government activities. However, staff members were trained to extend their range of services within the existing budget - namely through a consumer aid course backed up by the city's Consumer Council.

The current director, Kirk O'Donnell, is the first head of OPS to have served in the field. The Mayor chose him, in part, because of his very successful tenure as manager of the Dorchester Little City Hall. O'Donnell has concentrated on improving staff quality and performance through an extensive program of training, monitoring, and goal-setting. A modified PPBS approach has permitted a more rationale approach to the staffing of the Little City Halls, and a more highly qualified research and planning section has reaffirmed the original mandate to use the Little City Halls as an instrument to upgrade the delivery of city services.

FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

After their often controversial early years, the Little City Halls appear to have come into their own as a valued element both of city government and in the life of Boston's neighborhoods.

The relative success of the program to date argues against any major changes in its structure or goals. Increasing emphasis will be placed, however, on staff quality and performance, on outreach to broaden the Little City Halls constituency, and on an enhanced role both in neighborhood planning and in working to improve the delivery of city services.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Alfred P. Sloan School of Management
50 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

MEMO: The BOSTON Project

DATE: December 12, 1973

SUBJECT: Planning Boston's Neighborhoods

FROM: Louis E. Alfeld

TO: All Participants

I enclose a discussion paper on the subject of planning Boston's neighborhoods, for our luncheon meeting Thursday, December 13, 12:00-2:00 at City Hall. If you have not received the first discussion paper, "Questioning Boston's Economic Future", which was discussed at the November 29 luncheon, please call Ms. Kathy Kautzer, 253-1550 and she will send you a copy.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Alfred P. Sloan School of Management
50 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

December 12, 1973

System Dynamics Group

The BOSTON Project

Discussion Paper #2
Planning Boston's Neighborhoods
by Louis Edward Alfeld

Introduction. Historically, much of Boston's unique residential appeal has come from the diversity of the city's neighborhoods. Today many traditional neighborhoods face great pressures for change. Some neighborhoods already exhibit signs of serious deterioration. Others seem healthy. What forces cause neighborhoods to change? What policies can lead to long-term neighborhood stability?

A. What is a Neighborhood?

Neighborhoods fill the gap between families and cities in our social order. Generally, people think of neighborhoods as smaller than communities but often interchange the two terms. Within a community, a special social and physical cohesiveness identifies each neighborhood, both to its residents and to outsiders. Residents of South Boston, for example, see their community as composed of many distinct neighborhoods such as Flood Square and Andrew Square. Residents within a neighborhood tend to share common social traits such as ethnic, religious or economic values which set them apart from others. Neighborhood identity also depends on definable geographical boundaries. In addition, neighborhoods depend upon a notion of stability; a neighborhood must exist for a number of years before common social bonds develop between residents. The social traits peculiar to each neighborhood tend to attract residents who share those same traits. A tendency toward homogeneity within neighborhoods makes residents feel socially comfortable. Thus, over time, neighborhoods become established territories within which a recognizable social order prevails.

CITY
|
COMMUNITY
|
NEIGHBORHOOD
|
FAMILY
|
INDIVIDUAL

Neighborhoods Are
Part of a
Hierarchy of
Social Organization

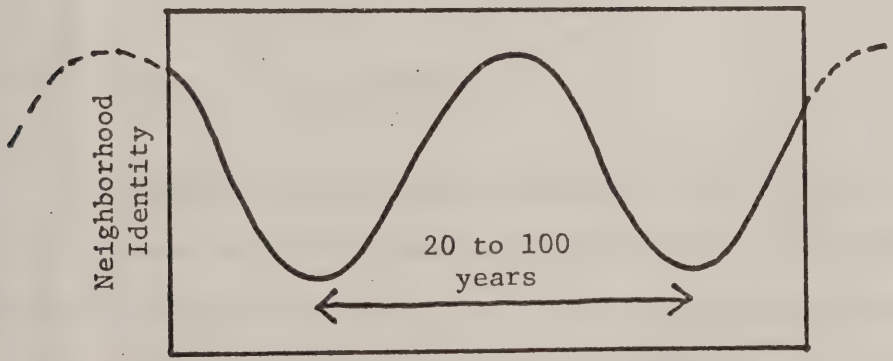
B. Pressures for Neighborhood Change

Many forces create pressures for neighborhood change. To residents, most pressures seem to arise from beyond their immediate neighborhood. Zoning changes to permit high-rise construction, street widening to accomodate heavier traffic flows and the influx of "newcomers" who hold different social values than older residents are examples of what residents often see as outside pressures for change. Yet many allegedly outside pressures are actually symptomatic of more fundamental changes whose causes lie within the neighborhood.

Urban Dynamics. Urban dynamics theory suggests the aging of residential and business structures as one basic causal mechanism of neighborhood change. As a neighborhood's residential buildings age, deterioration sets in. To combat declining property values, owners may convert some older, less desirable housing into smaller apartments. As more affluent buyers and tenants shun the neighborhood, less affluent persons move in. Neighborhood population density can rise. At the same time new employment opportunities fail to replace obsolescing industrial and commercial facilities within the neighborhood. Fewer local jobs means higher unemployment and more commuting by residents to jobs elsewhere. Young adults who find jobs outside the neighborhood may also tend to move out. As a result, the age and income composition of a neighborhood shifts. Eventually high unemployment, rising crime, and physical decay may drive out enough residents so that population densities fall.

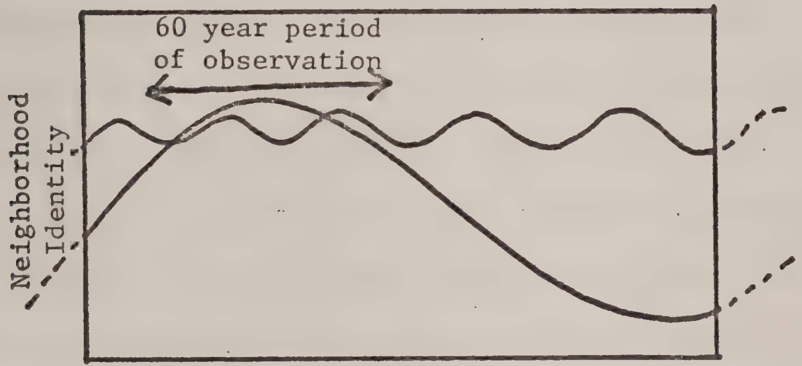
Other Forces for Change. Urban dynamics provides a starting point for analyzing neighborhood change. Yet other forces besides physical neighborhood aging must help explain why one neighborhood declines quickly and another remains healthy. For example, a fortuitous geographical location helps explain why the neighborhoods within the Beacon Hill community appear strong. Differences in structural construction quality may help explain why rehabilitation is economical in one neighborhood and not in another. Sudden in-migration of various ethnic minorities affects neighborhood stability. Differences between changing neighborhoods help explain why the similar causal mechanism of aging can affect neighborhoods differently.

The Neighborhood Life Cycle. Urban dynamics theory indicates that neighborhoods may follow a life cycle through initial formation, maturity and eventual decline. The degree of neighborhood cohesiveness or identity rises during neighborhood formation, stabilizes for a while and then declines. The amount of oscillation between neighborhood identity and no identity may vary according to many factors such



A Hypothetical Neighborhood
Life Cycle

as physical decay or specific residential social traits. The time between successive peaks may vary according to the rate of deterioration of buildings. Thus neighborhoods like those in the North End may exhibit deep fluctuations over very long time periods so that the rise and fall is barely perceptible while Beacon Hill areas may fluctuate more rapidly yet not so deeply. To the outsider, both communities may appear quite stable.



Hypothetic Comparison of
Life Cycles in Two
Distinct Neighborhoods

C. The City and its Neighborhoods

Diversity Among Neighborhoods. No two people ever have exactly the same social and aesthetic preference. Yet enough people have similar preferences that a particular neighborhood draws them together. Almost everyone must compromise in choosing a neighborhood. For many people, where they live depends on their ability to pay. Generally, however, even within a lower-income community such as Roxbury, many different social traits within identifiable neighborhoods exist. Generally, the more homogeneous a neighborhood, the more likely

residents are to get along with one another and the more satisfying life is likely to be. From a city-wide point of view, the greater the diversity among neighborhoods, the more likely every individual within the city will be able to find exactly the right neighborhood to suit him, regardless of his ability to pay. To raise the quality of life for its residents, therefore, the city might adopt policies which promote neighborhood diversity.

Neighborhood Goals. Generally when neighborhood residents hold similar social values, residents also tend to agree on goals for their neighborhood. Neighborhood goals, however, are rarely articulated. Instead a local consensus exists as to what neighbors want and what priorities they hold. These informal neighborhood goals actually reflect combinations of tradeoffs between what people want and don't want. Each neighborhood maintains its unique identity precisely because residents agree on tradeoff combinations unique to themselves. Because neighborhoods already incorporate many tradeoffs acceptable to residents, most residents think of neighborhood goals in terms of keeping conditions from changing. Residents' desire to preserve the stability of their neighborhoods reflects a fear of losing an established social order and thereby degrading the quality of urban life. A theory of a neighborhood life cycle could help to show why neighborhoods change and how residents might better accomodate change. Realistic neighborhood goals might thereby develop so that city planning efforts could better mesh with neighborhood needs.

Role of the City. Long-term trends toward neighborhood deterioration continually undermine a city's social order. Abrupt and unforeseen neighborhood change lowers the quality of urban life. When neighborhoods disappear, residents no longer share common social values, often viewing each other with suspicion, hostility or indifference. A weakened social fabric encourages crime and vandalism. Concern over property and appearance decreases. The city, therefore, might encourage neighborhood stability by developing programs to smooth out serious fluctuations in neighborhood life cycles. Urban dynamics theory could help in identifying which neighborhood conditions might be sensitive to policy intervention.

D. Questions

In spite of our limited knowledge of what causes neighborhoods to change, several questions occur in reference to present BRA neighborhood plans.

1. Will neighborhoods initially composed largely of young people 20-35 years old become very unstable as these youthful residents age and move out?
2. Will new capital investment programs upset some present tradeoffs in neighborhoods thereby accelerating neighborhood change? For example, will new schools attract more families than jobs can support? Will new transportation encourage commuting between neighborhoods?
3. Where will future residents of older neighborhoods work? Particularly the children of present residents? How can

their education best be managed?

4. Will more local control and decision-making responsibilities over schools help reinforce social bonds?

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program Jan. 10, 1974

Towards a Housing Policy and Program for Boston

Hank Emerson: All of you on our mailing list have received up to date schedules of our meetings. This is the housing meeting, Jan. 17 is a dinner meeting, Jan. 24 is a meeting on jobs, manpower and education. So as of Jan. 24 we will have covered something about economic development, housing, manpower and education and that would leave transportation and environment, and as we move down the schedule we will hit the critical issues and if we can succeed and put these together we might have a meaningful look at Boston as opposed to everyone looking at housing one week and economic development another, or different groups looking at specialized areas. For those of you who looked at Lou Alfeld's paper, some of the language may be new to you. Lou is willing to spend about 10 hours with you on technical stuff.

Lou Alfeld: We could meet Thursday Feb. 14 and Friday morning.

Hank Emerson: How does that sound format wise, Thursday and Friday morning?

Lou Alfeld: It would be most of Thursday, breaking around 3:00 p.m. and Friday morning. We've tried to do this during one day, but it's too much. If you have a chance to read some things and then the next day have a chance to ask some questions, you'll feel satisfied as far as your own probing goes.

Hank Emerson: Let's start this meeting by calling on Alex. We also will have time to ask questions and have discussion so let's take advantage of this.

Alex Ganz: Today we'll begin with a housing policy and program for the city of Boston Kent Colton and Rolf Goetze will be making very brief presentations for the city and I also want to introduce the other city people here who have been involved in housing policy, Bob Kiley, Director of the Mayor's policy staff, David Strohm of the Mayor's policy staff, and Andrew Olins, the Mayor's housing policy advisor.

Kent Colton: I have the task in 7 minutes to try and do soemthing which is impossible: to summarize the highlights of the effort that has been going on for about a year in terms of research in trying to think about a housing program for the city of Boston and the components that that program should have. I think that based on what I know about the sections you've already covered it's pretty fair to say that Boston is at a very strategic and important point in respect to its future. The population has stabilized; there are a number of positive things with respect to housing and development; we're aware we're in a new era; there have been a variety of things that have come to pass with respect to housing and these also have to be taken into consideration. We have high interest rates. Most of you are aware of the fact that the city of Boston has a rent control policy and there are those who say that rent control influences or makes it more difficult for development to coour in the city. Certainly considerations in the environment, environmental impact statements are going to be involved in development in the decade in the 70's. So in this context it's important for us to think about a coordinated housing program in the city of Boston. That's what I'm going to try to do in part, hit the highlights. I'm only going to hit the highlights because the assumption as all of you have the paper that was sent out and have read it. But in hitting the highlights I hope that I'll raise a number of questions in your mind and get a discussion going. Basically, there are four basic points that I want to cover. First, one of the most important parts of the city's housing strategy is upgrading of the existing stock in the city. There are a number of reasons that we think that's important. First we think it's a feasible thing to do. Second there are alot of benefits that can accrew, and third the potential market is there. Let me explain - Boston basically is a city comprised of small units and many of them being old units - just some statistics to review them very quickly - there are 232,000 dwellings units in the city, found in 80,000 housing structures. Out of those 80,000

housing structures it's interesting to note that 90% of those structures are one to four unit structures. So we have a city made up of many one, two, three and four family units and most of that being twos and threes. The second thing is that the home ownership in the city is really quite high. If we look at the 1970 census it lists ownership according to units, and only 27% of the housing units in the city are occupied by home owners - but because you have so many two, three and four unit structures it turns out that 70% of the housing structures in the city have an owner occupant. So that means we've got a lot of owners in the city and that's potentially very positive. Now as far as the condition of the city goes, the majority of the housing stock in the city is in basically good condition. Based on an inspection done by the housing inspection department about nine months ago. We classified the city into basically five groups. 1) Areas that were potentially as good as new, 2) housing units that required a modest amount of fix up in the range of $500-$750 per dwelling unit, 3) where there was a fairly substantial amount of work that would be required, 4) where if you were going to fix up that dwelling unit it would require gut rehabilation going in an actually fixing up the entire unit, and 5) where demolition is probably most appropriate. In the first two areas, 70% of the city's housing stock fit - basically requires only modest fix up, 25% requires in the range of about $2,000 per unit, and another 5%-6% require gub rehab or demolition. But overall the condition of the housing stock is pretty good. And cupled with that based on a variety of other factors tha market potential for fixing up much of that housing stock is also good. According to our estimated we feel that the private market with some assistence in terms of shallow subsidizes from the public sector could fix up about 80% of that housing stock. And that for modest rent increases like $10-$20 per unit, 90% of the housing stock could be fixed up. So we're saying there's lots of potential as far as the existing stock. But the second point, is that not all housing can be fixed up. We've outlined a strategy of programs but it's important to realize that that strategy in itself is not going to be sufficent to fix up all of the housing in the city, and indeed there are areas in the city which require a much greater level of subsidy. On this chart the darkest color is where over 25% of the housing units require gut rehab or demolition - and quite frankly in those darkest areas you have to realize that firstly this requires more than a housing program. It's probably a function of income, of jobs and in fact that's why we've got to talk about a coordinated program - you're not going to solve problems there via housing alone. Secondly the level of subsidys required there would be really greater in many cases than the ones that we're advocating. We're advocating a shallow set of subsidys so to speak where the public sector can help to leverage the encourage the private sector to become involved and the majority of the dollars will come from private investment. So we've developed a set of principles: you want to start from areas of strength - and you want to catch decline in early stages instead of waiting until the decline is too great. The third thing is to talk about new developments and new construction as it fits into the context of the housing program. As I mentioned already we think that new development is an important part of the housing strategy for Boston in the decade of the 70's. But the environment is different than it was even two of three years ago in terms of some of the things that are happening in the city. And so we're no longer advocating a policy of new construction, but in fact we're trying to talk about areas where growth ought to occur in the city and the downtown and the kinds of construction for low and moderate income housholds which is most appropriate.

A very quick set of figures about the 60's and the 70's in terms of development that has occured in the city over the last few years. This chart outlines residential construction in Boston basically over the last twelve years. The yellow refers to conventional or private construction and the green referes to subsidized construction, both public housing and federally subsidized housing where the federal government helps to subsidize the interest rate. The brown color is the total of the two. Basically, overall there was a development of about 20,000 housing units in the city of Boston in the 1960's. That's an average of about 2,000 units per year. You can see some fluctuatations, 64-45 has to do with low interest rates, there was also a zoning change in 1964, and people were rushing in to get building permits to build under the old set of zoning regulations before the new set came in, so there's a real

burst of private construction in 1964 and 1965. In 1967 there's a lot of subsidized housing as part of urban renewal and a federally assisted program known as 221(d)(3) which subsidized the interest rate. After that we see ourselves getting into a range of about 1,500 to 2,000 units a year. And in fact that same range has continued to the present - what's under construction now. There have been some facinating shifts that have occured in the housing in the city though between the 60's and the 70's, however. First, if you add up all of these lines in the decade in the 60's, 75% of the construction was done by the private sector, 25% was subsidized. The other shift is in location. In the decade of the 70's you see a real concentration--to the extent that there is private building--in the downtown. You see 50% in terms of what's planned and proposed and 80% of the things that are going to be done by the private sector, if they are going to occur they're going to occur in the downtown and that will be large scale development, not small scale development. You see an interesting shift in terms of private sector involvement coming back downtown.

With that as a background we've set some targets for new development. These were listed and through these quickly. 1) We talked about development in the downtown. That appears to be an appropriate place for middle and upper income housing. The market estimate is strong and we've done some surveys as to who the people are who are living in the downtown housing. We set a target for 15,000 units for new development in the downtown. As far as low and moderate income, new development is much more difficult. There has to be an honest realization that we're not going to meet the needs, in terms of a series of criteria, of all of the low income people in the city of Boston. We've talked about new construction mainly for the elderly and some for low and moderate income housing in three areas 1) new development for the elderly 10,000 units 2) subsidized and public housing 8,000 units (we talk about these under MHFA-type income mixing, mixing the low and moderate income segements of the segemetns of the population), and 3) a goal of 6,000 units that would be basically replacement of demolished housing. We're talking about 1,800 units per year for demolition, which would be 18,000 units of demolition over the course of the decade. So we're talking about the replacement housing 6,000 units being much below that. Adding the entire elderly and low and moderate income production largets still results in somewhat less than replacement of the 18,000 units of demolition.

The last item is that 35% of the home owners in the city in 1 to 4 unit structures are over the age of 62. That means that there are special needs for the elderly population, and it also means that this is a segement of the housing stock that could be soft and when we talk about a goal of building for the elderly, we're also talking about helping those who choose to move by providing other alternatives for them. Then in turn this fixes up units to provide other people in the city opportunities for housing. That summarizes it.

Rolf Goetze: Kent was speaking for the city as a whole, the number of units requiring gut rehab or demolition, this is a very costly process and if you don't have federal funds you can't do it. They are fairly localized, and what you see on the map is that the areas requiring demolition and gut rehab are in pockets. We do have strategies we're thinking of that affect those, but that goes beyond the housing strategy and involves other things like manpower, education. That still leaves us roughly with 60%-70% area of the city and the things I'd like to talk about deal with the people and the housing conditions in this remaining 2/3 of the city. I decided to go in this direction in reading Lou's very interesting paper, to try and give you a feeling of what neighborhood revitalization is all about. The strength of these neighborhoods really lies with something hard to define. I was taking someone around from outside of Boston who was familar with other cities that have alot of abandoment and he said it's incredible how much interlarding you have. What he meant was, you have stock that isn't like Oceanhill Brownsville, acres and acres of the same sort of thing, but you've got alot of variation, and that's because historically it began as farms, houses for the gentry, carriage houses, houses on the hills and triple deckers. Wherever you go in Boston (if you don't go down the beaten track along say Blue Hill Avenue) there is a very high degree of variety and some very sound housing and some mixed housing. Most of us who deal with housing accept the classical thing called filtration--it's the "hand-me-down" process that after one income group leaves the housing it goes

to another group that can afford less housing, and the house gets alittle shabbier. However one of the main things that takes up alot of city time is a different process and we don't have a name for it, we call it reverse filtration. It's a process mentioned in last week's transcript in Kirk O'Donnell's address--the take over of existing housing by a more affluent class. This is something not just confined to the South End; it occurs in Allston-Brighton and around the University of Massachusetts, the Affiliated Hospitals Complex-and has something there, both in the location and the housing, that they won't get in in some of the suburbs. I'm not trying to say that will automatically save our housing stock but it interests us. We also got involved in a close analysis of the subsidized housing built for low and moderate income people (we had a session here at the Parkman Center with another group). One of the clear conclusions out of that was that housing for one income group alone is much more apt to be in trouble than if you have some sort of mixing. You're probably familar with the state development program (that's the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency) which deliberty mixes. We also find that the neighborhoods that have the best prospects are ones, because of a mixed stock, that still holds their appeal.

Our real question is who's going to replace "Mrs. Murphy" the resident owner of housing, whether its triple deckers or duplexes. In a way she's been doing a very effective job, but now she's old, her husband has died, she has trouble putting up the storm windows - the question is who will replace her and who will get a mortgage? I brought some materials on the Ashmont section of Dorchester - in some ways in representative and in some ways it's leading. (Parts of Jamaica Plain or Charlestown are similar) Whta has facinated us is that's an area where affulent people or people with good prospects are buying individual houses on a replacement basis. This is not on a displacement basis (and that's what the dialogue with Kirk O'Donnell would be about.) If you look at the individual cases, it's an elderly person who dies, the house is on the market, and it's a younger person who buys it. I brought something along which impressed me - you're all familar with the League of Women Voters Tours that go through houses on Beacon Hill or Brattle Street in Cambridge. Well this year in the Ashmont Hill section therewas such a tour. It identifies a number of interesting houses. This is an attractive area not far from Ashmont station - the mistake I always made is to go down the main throughfares, but there are lots of interesting pockets and these have lots of attractiveness. (Some pictures are shown of interiors and exteriors.) I have a map hanging in my office of abondoned, dilapicated or deteriorated houses. One of the little dots on that map is actually a house like one of these that belongs to one of our district planners. The house did have a fire in it. The mortgage was with a local bank. (The guy has children, the youngest just entering school and intends to remain there.) When the fire occured and the insurance company paid out, the owner was advised by his bank to take the money and split. "Don't put it back into the house, you know what's going to happen to that area"--It's this kind of thing that can undermine the future of an area of that sort. Now Ashmont Hill is only one of several, but the important thing is there's a real problem an aftermath of the Boston's Banks Urban Renewal Group (BBURG) in obtaining lending in these areas, We're not urging that we go back into areas where over 10% of the units require gut rehab or demolition. I'm saying that 70% of the stock is not that kind of housing, and that affects much of Dorchester, Mattapan, Roslindale - all of the lighter areas on this map. Right now we have an increadible problem regarding lending and also to make sure the city services are working adequatly to make sure the confidence is maintained. Confidence in those areas is being expressed by individuals and the key question is whether we as institutions back them up or really let them sink or swim on their own.

I'm not going to summarize our stragety bundle, I'll give you the main parts of it. The first key part is insurance and bank support--overcoming, red-lining. We know there's been a troublesome history in Boston beu we have a "Fair plan". Yet people who are trying to get loans, (even people on the Governors staff who want to live on Fort Hill or something likt that) just can't get mortgages. That would be the main strength - to attract people like that to replace,(not to displace the people who are living there, but to takeover as people die). It's a continuing dynamic process. If you can't get the replacement mortgages and you can't get insurance, then we're really

stuck. But from the city point of view, we need code inforcement, on a service basis. The Mayor's already taken a step with the tax credit for fix up. There are attempts within the Housing Inspection Department to get more into this on a service basis--we see this as a complementry thing. I'm sure Alex at the earlier session stressed visable public improvements. You can't have confidence unless you're aware of things going on in your neighborhood, and there's a real effort now in that direction. The remaining thing,(and it's probably the most difficult thing to do) is desicive action where you have an eyesore--an owner who is an absentee, or who just doesn't care, or more critically an abandoned house. To be able to move in swiftly and remove it, even if you only have grass there--not to have that house sitting around, because its contagiuos. We also have strategies that are more elaborate, more dependent on whatever comes out of revenue sharing and so forht, for areas that have 16% or more units requiring gut rehab or demolition. We will have to wait to see what comes out of that federal grab bag or if nothing comes out. But there's an awful lot Boston can do right now on an complemantary strategy. Just make sure that mortgages, insurance the city services are doing their part. The issue is who replaces people as they die. It's not displacement (which politically creates alot of the problems). If you look over 10 years it's amazing how Jamaica Plain very quietly has had a very strong number of people with good prospects who are replacing people who were around in 1960, with really not much dislocation, and this is possible in many of the neighborhoods.

Hank Emerson: Well Lou, as usual the gap between Urban Dynamics and what we've heard is apparent so see what you can do.

Lou Alfeld: I only want to make two points, one had to do with method of analysis of Urban Dynamics and how I think it may be a help in the analyzing of what's going on in housing, and a second point of some numbers and what we've actually got in the housing stock. The point I tried to make in the paper in terms of the method of analysis is that we've heard alot of numbers about construction, about how many houses there are and about demolition. What I'm trying to do is sort them out in terms of what are rates and what are levels and what are the dynamic implications of certain things as rates and levels - for example it was mentioned that we've had a historical construction rate of about 2,000 units per year over the last 10,12,13 years and I asked Rolf if there was a similar chart for the demolition rate. That chart you saw was an inflow rate, how many houses are added to the total stock every year. There's also a similar chart one could draw on how many houses have been taken off the market, that have been removed from the total stock of housing. Between '60 and '70 there was a loss of about 6,000 units which meant that the outflow rate slighly higher than the input rate, there was more demolition than construction. The questions I really have for the plan for the 70's and beyond, is not only what do we want as a goal for the total stock of housing, how much housing, but then how are the two rates, the inflow rate and the outflow rate going to effect the changes in the stock. The only way you'll change the total on housing is to build more or less or demolish more or less. It's the inflow and outflow rates that change that stock, that's the basic point on looking at it in terms of the rate it flows through. Do we get actually more units or fewer units over time and of course then the second point is the distribution of those units among what I call upper, middle and lower income housing. How is the total stock distributed among the income groups--who's going to be living there--and as I pointed out the quality of the housing has a great deal to do with who lives in the city. Just using a very simple diagram that I drew in figure one, I've taken in that paper the numbers for the rates of flow from the plans that were presented by the BRA, and then I took my own estimates of where the stock was initially in terms of how much lower, middle and upper income - and what the average life times for housing, and I assume a little more than 100 years, around 120 years for the average life of a house. The point that I made in the paper was, (if you make assumsions that there is a tremendous stock of middle income housing that presently exists in the city and that much of that housing stock is already rather old and is aging rapidly) we have a tremendous potential for alot of housing stock aging into a category of what I call lower income housing. It may just be poor quality housing regardless of who lives there, but becoming very old, drifting to the bottom of the market. So the intial reaction of planners in recognizing this potential is to put a great deal of emphasis on rehab and trying to maintain that stock.

You begin to see it slipping now, 25% of the housing stock is already slidding down rapidly, and a certain amount of investment is required to keep that stock from sliding down further. In looking at the long term dynamics, that strategy tends to just maintain alot of housing that still has a potential for aging. You've got to put more and more money into it every year to keep it up at that middle income level or to keep it up at a high quality level, every year there's new shingles, new siding and more new you've got to put into it, while the foundations are still falling apart and the timbers are falling apart. I know that much of the housing in the city is good quality, there is some stuff that is worth rehab, maybe helf the city, maybe three quarters--I don't have any numbers on that what's good and what isn't. But if we try to put alot of money into housing that isn't going to last another 40 or 50 years, we wind up maintaining it and fixing it up for ten years, then ten years from now it's not an average of $2,500 per unit to fix up but it's an average of $8,000 a unit to fix it back up to standards, it's a continuing rate of investment required to keep it up. I just throw those numbers into the model just to see what happened, and I was as shocked as I suppose all of you were when you looked at that little model input that I put into the paper. Over 90 years (which is a long time to look at something) it shows that clearly the trend (if you just take the demolition of 2000 units a year and as the outflow rate and about 2000 units per year construction) that the Boston's housing stock is already biased toward the middle income range now, and it could tend to drift down. One of the things I'd like to do with the BRA planners is to worry about the definations, how we really define these houses, is this really a possibility, how much would be in each unit. As we all know the real thing that determines how fast housing goes down and gets rehabilated is income, it's the people living there. I think you said 25%-30% of the Boston population is considered in the lower income category or elderly. That means 30% of the housing is for those people. They don't have the income to maintain that housing, it's either a question of replacing them with other people who do have income and where do they go, or finding jobs for them to move them up so they can actually do the rehab themselves. All of this is part of the integrated strategy we'll be getting into at the next meeting when we talk about man power and education and training also. I'll try at that meeting to tie in jobs and income back to the housing and rehab and renewal neighborhood plans we've already discussed. I'll leave it open for discussion as far as how one ought to view the housing stock and give money for the housing stock. I personally have said that what we really need is a goal to decide how much we want to have at each level that makes for healthy distribution and then discuss what rates will get us to those levels, and then try to find out if there are policies that will actually mainpulate those rates in the way we want. Maybe we just don't have the tools to do what we'd like to do, but it's important to start from what we want to do, rather than starting from a list of what tools we have available and then see if they will get us anywhere.

Jim Carrol: A question on the lower income leive. I believe it was mentioned here that it becomes the realization that we will not be able to meet the housing demands at that level. Could you say more about why.

Kent Colton: Number one the obvious and most difficult problem for a low income person is that he doesn't have enough income. Maybe that goes without saying, but the city has fairly large proportion of its population making less thatn the $5,000 a year. And we also did some analysis trying to compare the housing units in the city and what a person could afford assuming they were willing to pay 35% of their income on rent. I don't know if you're familar with too much of the terminology with respect to housing, but there's something magic attached to the notion of how much of a person's income is he supposed to pay on rent, and just to compare that we did a mismatch analysis and discovered that if people were willing to pay 35% of their income on rent in the city of Boston in the current housing stock, there would be 20,000 people who would be out of luck, so to speak--they would have to pay too much of their income on rent to find a unit in the city. Now when you have a gap that's as large as 20,000, and the majority of that are people who have a real gap, then you have a real problem in terms of incomes, beyond our ability of solving via a housing strategy. Now if in fact you could employ those people aid them with manpower

training and better schools, but thus it's not so much a housing problem. We'd better not focus on housing first for that set of people. The other things that contribue to the difficulty of the problem is the realization that the problem we've have over the last several decades in our nation to help the housing needs of the low and moderate income have only had mixed success. Public housing started out concentrating alot of poor people in one place. Subsidized housing has had alot of problems in terms of whether or not it's really going to be economically and finacally viable, so that's another reason the federal government called a moratorium, and the attitude at the national level is that it looks like for the next three or four years there isn't going to be any commitment to solving the housing problem from the national level. So given all of those factors and given the dimensions of income problems, you're not going to solve the whole thing particularly through housing, we ought to remember that the problem ought to be attacked on other dimensions.

Hank Emerson: Lou do you have anything to say from the Urban Dynamics point of view on that same question about the utopian city of the impossibility of it.

Lou Alfeld: I made comments on that before.

Hank Emerson: Jim's question seems to fit the question...

Lou Alfeld: If you could create the city in which everybody that wants to could move in and pay only 35% of their income for housing, you may well attract more people than you could fit in the city and they would build the price beyond the 35% again. The interesting thing is regardless of how much people can afford to pay they still find places to live, they find very low quality places that are substandard and I assume the 35% is for standard housing not for just a tent, but it maybe for anything, or crowd together, or something else. There will be places to live whether or not the housing is available--largely a function (as Kent points out) of income. One of the things I'll be doing in later sessions is putting together all of these numbers (including assumptions about income and jobs) into one model and making a few runs so that we can talk in terms of overall system behavior, about the effect of housing startegy on income strategy, and so on.

Jim Carrol: I appreciate that and it helps me understand. The reaction to it seems very rational to me and reasonable but all the reasoning seems to be old, we still get back to a severe problem that we've had in our cities since we've had cities and so that everything we're doing here doesn't seem to be solving any problems, I would hope that an Urban Dynamic approach or systemic approach would help us answer some of these problems that we've been coping with.

Lou Alfeld: Let me just point to one possibility, when you look at the 35% figure. A person who's earning $50,000 per year and has to pay 35% of his salary for housing, no one really feels bad about it, he still has alot of income to spend on all the other things he needs. The 35% figure goes down I suppose as income goes up, but if you could produce a city in which people had higher incomes you could certainly run up the percentage that they pay for housing. One of the things that Urban Dynamics has pointed to is what appears to be a trade off in cities between income and jobs and housing. A city that produces alot of jobs and income for people draws in more people, and if it continues to draw in people and you need some sort of a counter balance to the in migration, and that counter balance either comes through unemployment or through a tight housing market or through some other aspect of the city in which keeps most cities relatively attractive to one another. Individuals all have preferences, and will move to places they like best but on the average you don't find all the unemployed people in the country moving out to Los Angeles, Phoenix or Dallas because there are more jobs there. There is also tight housing and there are also other reasons that don't draw everyone to one place, and as soon as some people go where unemployment then goes up. Unemployment statistics are generally (within a range) the same across the U.S. because people migrate back and forth for employment reasons.

Kent Colton: Let me justmake one other comment in respect to the low income housing problem. Most of the strategies that have come from the federal level since we've been in the housing business in the 1930's had to do with new construction of housing and a whole variety of reasons for that had to do with lobbies that simply wanted to build housing. So you have a mixed meeting needs of the poor, with at the same time building

housing and helping the housing industry. I think we're realizing now that new housing for poor people is out of the question. Once you begin to spend $30,000 a unit to build subsidized housing, you can probably do alot more in meeting the housing needs of the poor in the existing stock by spending $2,000 to fix up that unit or even $4,000 to fix up that unit, and get something which is much more economical and in fact may even be more reasonable to that particular poor person. So the notion of housing allowences is becoming more and more viable and is in fact the policy that HUD is pushing for. (It's not clear at all what support there really is for that within the Administration) It's much more a matter of giving the money to the person who is demanding the housing and letting him go out and seek it in the market place, as opposed to trying to build new which is becoming so costly that it may be really prohibitive in terms of meeting the housing problem.

Eli Post: In Lou's paper the bottom of page 5 points out the potential pitfalls of the policy which focus too much of the cities resources on exisitng housing stock, namely that existing housing is older and older and 10 to 20 years from now you end up with a city with a large proporation of housing actually older and so on. That discussion touches on probably the single most important decision the city as a whole will make in the next few years regarding housing. There are bills now pending before Congress which will the city give more flexibility in terms of how it allocates its housing. The revenue sharing bill we've talked about previously would allow cities for the first time to choose between spending monies for traditional urban renewal projects like Government Center or setting up rehab programs and it's a very central decision the city makes and I think Lou pointed out and the issue we're trying to deal with is to develop a proper analytical framework so you can make that decision as rationally possible. I think Lou has taken our work too literally, when Kent said that 70% of the housing could be renovated at nominal cost, he didn't mean that the city should attempt to do that. Much of Boston's housing can be saved by miminual investment, but that does not necessarly mean when funds flow in and you look at the tradeoffs between renovating and building new neighborhoods, that you might not come out with a decision that favored some new construction in addition with fixing neighborhoods. One of the great problems we face is the monies flowing in don't begin to compare with the monies necessary to acheive any of the objectives we've identified. The price tag of what Kent and Rolf talked about is three, four, five hundred million dollars per year. Under the revenue sharing bill the city's to get twenty to thirty million dollars per year so that a period of ten to 20 years is needed to achieve just the objectives that Kent talked about and that doesn't begin to deal with all of the investment needs going on in the city.

Lou Alfeld: Just to clarify my own point, I don't mean also that we should demolish all the old housing. This is a very old house that has been kept up and certainly aesthetically much better than going through demolition and reconstruction a new $30,000 home (which is according to present construction standards is pretty shabby). We might be much better off in rehabbing much of the stock, but moving back up to the top of the line, that's all I'm talking about, moving it back up to that premium level.

Eli Post: I think what happens as you go along you begin to make qualitative judgements about the different neighborhoods. You may find that while the buildings in East Boston and South Boston were built around the same time as the buildings in Dorchester and Jamaica Plain, that the buildings in the latter neighborhoods were of much higher originial quality construction, they have large rooms, better subsystems and light and the city ought to focus on those older neoghborhoods because they have prospects for continued use where as the other older neighborhoods aren't geared for another twenty to thirty years of useful life and demolition should be seen as a viable alternative.

Kent Colton: I think that there are many city people here and it is good fo us to have dialogue among ourselves too because I do want to clarify or comment on one thing that Eli memtioned. I think the 70% which could be fixed up for marginal cost (and you'd really have to go in by neighborhoods to understand this) could be fixed up by a set of strategies which involve very minumal public investment. What we're talking about is using the public sector as a means of helping to encourage the private sector, to encourage banks so they will in fact give loans to people in these areas who want to

fix their homes up. That's the strategy in the Mayor's housing improvement program where be basically said that I'm going to give a tax credit,a 10% tax credit on fixing up housing stock.

Hank Emerson: Dun Gifford, I was waiting for you to join the discussion.

Dun Gifford: It seems to me that this particular discussion (the BRA policy paper on housing and Lou's response to it) is the first time we've come into a very real crunch. We've been through alot of other discussions and they haven't been as real as this one in terms of the city policy in the making and measurable from an Urban Dynamics standpoint response to it. I'd like to make this suggestion that in the process of methodology this group can proceed, it might be helpful not to just finish today's discussion and go next week onto a new subject, but some how or another to crank into our series of discussions a further explication of this particular collision because it does seem to me (reading Lou's comments on the BRA policy paper) that he made some pretty strong suggestions that the long term thirty, sixty or ninty year consequences are not too good. I think Mr. Colton responded to that saying that Lou did this under assumptions are not precise or accurate and if that is the case, maybe it ought to be pushed alittle more in the context of what it is that you as chairman and the group are trying to do in bringing together dynamics and the city policy makers. I don't want to do injustice again to the schedule that has carefully been worked but it does seem to me, Hank, that this is a time there is a real policy for city housing in the making as the administration or Washington is coming up with new urban aid legislation, and Urban Dynamics has some specific and detailed knowledge of the implications of housing policy, partically from their work in Lowell, and it's a real one, it's not just talk, and that somehow or another we ought not to let it go.

Hank Emerson: I had the same feeling, it seems to me that the BRA paper really needs some careful analysis, the strategy does have a good start, there are alot of figures, it doesn't really jump out to me very clearly as to what points in this housing picture the city's going to be intervening in. Certainly we're talking about $2,000 fix up, but the city's not going to do that. Really basic issues, does the city have a housing shortage, and if so, where is that shortage, what is the percentage of city population living in housing under some sort of public assistance, is that going to be greater a decade from now or less. I think we have some real meat right here. I agree with you completly. In looking at our schedule we will look at the social aspects of something and certainly housing would have a lot greater opportunity for concrete analysis of housing than the social aspects, whatever those are. I think Alex and Lou ought to comment about whether they see an opportunity to get deeply into this particular issue.

Andy Olins: Let me take a different tact, I dind't realize this was going to get down to some sort of argument, looking like a dichotomy between philosophy of the BRA vs. the philosophy of Urban Dynamics. To deal with what the Urban Dynamics people say is not something that can be realiatically done with just this very preliminary sort of understanding. The Urban Dynamics argument is one that on the face of it is extrodinaly seductive argument as to the history and decline and fall of the city along with the relationships of things going on. This is the first time a number of the factors in the citys have been able to be quantified, and I want to say I think also that its a fundamental dangerous approach to get into, unless you really understand the implications of it, so to be setting the BRA stuff off against the Urban Dynamics stuff off of these two papers is ....

Hank Emerson: I didn't get the impression that this had occured.

Andy Olins: I think that the BRA approach is a very interesting one because it is a realistic one. It recognizes what is the city of Boston, what the quality of that housing stock is right now, what is a possible course of policy for the city to undertake within the political lifetime of any of us sitting here. What's going to happen thirty years from now I really don't have the slightest idea, not the slightest, and I don't think any planner with any sign of a rational point of view is oriented that far ahead. You do print outs for forty, sixty, ninty years and that's nice, but it's too theoritical for those of us dealing in the day to day problems of the city, where do we go tomorrow, next week or beyond that. We have this housing stock in the city. It's findamentally good housing stock, people live there, what can we do to conserve those neighborhoods. These are sort of the basic fundamental points that lead

the BRA. One other point, you can't look at the city of Boston behind closed gates so to speak. Boston is part of a metropolitan area. What is the housing situation in that metropolitan area, to what degree does Boston low and moderate income people, and to what degree does Boston have low and moderate income housing relative to where it is in the metropolitan area. We're not in vacuum here.

Rolf Goetze: I'd like to pick up on some of what Andy is saying, actually Lou and I were both at MIT a year before the Urban Dynamics book was released, and I found it extremely interesting and a very useful analytical approach. In many ways it describes the ways our minds work. However the outcomes are critically dependent on the assumptions you're making. The assumption we're making is that there are much less costly wasy of moving units. He has in his diagram obsolense going one way. He assumes its slow or fast, but it's a one way process and the reason I use reverse filtration, it's the other way as well. Our subsidized housing study suggests that whether you spend $3,000 or $30,000 on a new unit if you move into all the units in a row, and they are all lower income families you may still be stucl with a very costly problem. The operating expenses in subsidized housing and the number of projects we built in the last five to sever years treatened by forclosure are pretty staggering. Now that's so critical a problem for Boston that we devoted a whole study to it,but the thing that similarly facinates us is the way people cope or manage to do things on their own. You get wide differences in costs for almost the same results. What we havent's really been explicit about is that when people are in mixed neighborhoods there may be some sort of upgrading of people or getting better serivces or something which goes on between people and their interactions. Maybe what we're talking about in away for these "2/3's the area of Boston" is not just really a housing strategy but something that has to do with interaction between people. Back to the first question we had, what about the needs of these low and moderate income people, in away Lou is right, one way or another they will find housing, but the real question is whether their dependcy increases. I didn't mean to convey when I sent these photogrpahs around that we're going to have welfare people who will be living with these fancy panels or something likt that, what I was trying to suggest was that by having a mix of people in these neighborhoods, everybody can benefit. Take Cogman Square. You find a mixed group that comes together and works together it's beautiful, in around Cogman Square for example, it's black and white, it's middle and lower income and upper income. They're trying to save the neighborhood working jointly on something. They come to me for data on who gets mortgages and they do alot of homework going to Bristol County Plymouth County to document where some of the banks are lending the depositor's money and how little remains in Dorchester. That is a priceless resource, when you see that kind of effort. Though I have alot of respect for the analytical approach of Urban Dynamics, I wouldn't know how to begin to intergrate that bak into the process to give me a graph but I do see that this is something which we're ignoring if we just work out the costs and say how many units are we putting in and how many are we taking out, because people have changed in the process. Lou has a function, upward mobility, but I don't quite know how he knows what the rate of upward mobility is and what does it. I'm with Lou that there is something called upward mibility, but I think we are all at a loss to figure out who sudenly gets hit by upward mibility, what is the context in which it occurs. If we use Urban Dynamics in that sense but are imaginative then we've really got something. There's got to be a marriage of the analytical approaches to come up with the right assumptions. Our approach does not simply say that $2,000 is alot less that $30,000 per new unit but that maybe we'll do something in the process if we inject that money into the neighborhood in the right way, that neighborhoods will continue to have the strength and remain viable. That not only happened in some of them but and will put in this many new housing units.

Hank Emerson: Okay Dun let's get back to your question.

Dun Gifford: I just want to say I think the point that Mr. Olins interjected that Urban Dynamics does not provide for the human elements. If there is a policy developed (as a result of Urban Dynamics and the BRA and policy for Boston) that says there's got to be not nearly so much rehab and renovation but more demolition that's fine, until you take it to Mr. Olins and the chief executive of the city who's then got to notify

a whole lot of people that they've got to move out because their house is coming down, and I think that's a very helpful element to add. But on the other hand, it does not take away from the value of pushing the analysis further, that is to say the BRA perhaps responding to Lou's paper or working together on it and see what happens. Maybe the assumption when they get torough will find it will cause the computer model to come out opposite, who knows, but again it's a real thing, maybe Alex is the best person...

Hank Emerson: Let's stop dealing with contect of the two papers and talk about whether we can push the analysis farther.

Alex Ganz: I think the idea of better discussion and analysis of housing policy programs is a very good one. We think that it's very important and certainly are very interested in having a better understanding of what the city is trying to do as well as testing the meaningfulness of the proposed city policy and strategy, so I think that it's a good idea and we certainly could arrange a series of sessions either in place of our program as we have it or in addition to the program we have. We might think in terms of a complementary housing task force set of meetings that could dedicate itslef toward further analysis of the hosuing questions and housing policy. I'm sure we want it because we thing that there are many opportunities in housing for the city, private sector and we think that the program that was outlined identifies some of thses opportunities and we're certainly interested in better understanding of these and we're interested in testing it out our strategy and program ideas.

Hank Emerson: Lou do you have any last minute thoughts.

Lou Alfeld: I'm much interested in pushing it further and getting better numbers on it, I want to say that we sould not at the beginning confuse a policy outcome with the method of analysis or what the goal that might come out of analysis. I talked in this paper about increased demolition and, as Dun said, how do you tell people to get out of their houses because you're going to tear it down. The policy conclusions were those that we used in Lowell, that increased demolition and reduced construction have not been implemted there, although alot of people in City Council and public sector have been involved in debating those goals. One of the things that early emerged was that there would be a policy of course and it was politically impossible to tell people to get out, we're going to tear your house down, but in Lowell there were even more older homes and older people, that were dying off and old homes coming on the market that were unsuitable for tenancy again. They were way below standards and so actually several years ago the policy began and now its been enforced more. It is that they have an occupany permit before a new tenent can move into a building that's been vacated, and so every time someone moves out if that unit is below standard the owner has the option of either bringing up the standards or not putting it back on the market and if he doesn't put it back on the market, the building then, if it stays vacent for any period of time can be declared a nuisance and the owner can be forced to take it down. So they have put the burden on the private sector spread over a period of time such that no owner suddenly has to tear down all these buildings or get out immediatly but it's a very gradually phased policy, and we're talking about long term delays anyway. ten to twenty years, not something that's got to be done over night.

Hank Emerson: Any other quick comments.

Dun Gifford: I'm going to try a very specific reaction to Dun's observations that the city was close to carving out a policy in other words, how close to policy formation are we so that there maybe some imput remaining, what remains to be done?

Hank Emerson: I don't know how much we can deal with that today.

Bob Kiley: There's no danger of immenance and future conversations you mught have, and I probably ought not be speaking because I haven't seen that new full schedule and I'm a new comer to the group, I suspect you'll be running up against other items however having heard a few of them mentioned that will produce the kind of collision of ideas that Dun Gifford was mentioning and you do run the danger of getting off into all kinds of trenchs. An alternative might be that a number of collisions take place as you go through the schedule and then I'm not exactly sure what the grand stragety... rather than dealing with housing in a vaccum I think if you left the series run most of its course you'd have a more helpful conversation on housing as well as other issues.

unidenified speaker: It just occured to me while Lou was speaking that some of the conclusions he drew that caused some of the controversy were for Lowell, and Rolf's point on reflitration seed to me to be a very interesting one. It would be intersting to see where the possible comparisions for Lowell and Boston differ so dramatically. In Boston, particularly with the energy crisis which if that is prolonged, more and more of this reflitration process may become magnifited. Lowell is so different from Boston in terms of people commuting in from the suburbs, Lowell does have its suburbs but most people work in those suburbs I would guess. Where as if the cost of transportat continues to rise that the acceleration of the reliltartion process would have a very interesting impact I would think under the assumptions that went into your model.

Lou Alfeld: You certainly want to identify that energy and chanel it into those neighborhoods and those buildings that can well benefit from it, so the city as a whole would benefit as opposed to...

unidenified speaker: What that does in terms of attracting even more people to the center city competing with jobs, that ties in to the rest of it, competing for jobs that prevent upward mobility from those same communities is another interesting question.

Andy Olins: I really think there is a major fundamental changes in the life styles of younger people coming back in the city interested in the housing stock represneted by the three decker, that is no where in the dynamic model just things happening in the world--Urban Dynamics implied that it thinks about alot of things happening, but it doesn't.

unidenified speaker: I think that yound people have always replaced old people as far as selling houses, the world goes that was I suppose that the average age of the people...

Hank Emerson: Francine has the last comment.

Francine: I'm more or less an outsider to this group but in terms of future discussions on housing I think it would be a shmae to let this group dispand without talking about positive action, because I think the danger in any kind of an Urban Dynamics approach in terms of projections of pesemistic outcome is that it makes people very complacent, I think that there's a real distinction here and I think there was some confusion after soemthing that Kent said which really sould be corrected, and that is that a good portion of the problems in housing in the city the 28,000 of our mismatched population is certainly a housing problem but it might be beyond the ability of the city to correct high income rent ratios, but that doesn't change the fact that not only are alot of those people living in poor quality hosuing, even though they are paying more than 35% of their income. So many other people in the city are in poort quailty housing and in one sense you could say optimistically 70% of the housing units in the city only need $2,000 or less input, but you could also say alternatly that as many as 70% of the units in the city need more than $250-$500 input to maintain the code standards, and the question is where is the money coming from. It's the gap between the middle 40% of the housing stock, the 40% which needs more than just the pocket money or -ank account money that many can afford, and the 10% which should be demolished or rehab. It's that middle 40% or whatever which I think its within our ability and it's the housing stock that we have to work with and its within the framework of the banks and insurance institutions and alot of those groups in the city to help to work with the city in making policy. I don't think the policy is fixed because it's dependent upon these institutions, I think it would really be a shame with another housing session you got too much into projections and housing dynamic models and didn't really talk about are also relevent to the housing problem because if people have money to fix up their own houses then we don't have to worry about public assistance so these things tie in to education and jobs this whole thing will become interlaced.

Hank Emerson: Dun, I assure you with our steering committee and informal discussion we will try to figure out what to do with the desires a number of us seem to have, so keep in mind that Lou is planning a technical discussion on the 14th and 15th of February, and we have a dinner meeting next week, at City Hall. Now we have to worry about housing in addition to all other things.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert T. Kenney

FROM: Alex Ganz a.g.

DATE: January 29, 1974

SUBJECT: Summary Notes on Our January 17th Dinner Meeting of the Business Group Dialogue Series on "Planning and Development for Boston's Future"

The Thursday, January 17th Dinner Session of our Business Group Dialogue Series turned out to be a fun meeting, with significant endorsement of (1) our preliminary long-term plans, their feasibility and desirability, (2) our planning work, and (3) the planning process underway. The purpose of these notes is to provide you with a summary of the meeting.

On your behalf, I issued a call for help and collaboration in planning and development for Boston's future. I welcomed John Collins.

I briefly reviewed the background to the call for dialogue and interaction in planning and development, as follows:

(1) Trends and prospects for the City are favorable, despite large problems, old and new. There is the continuing expansion in the City's economic base, with growth in jobs and income. People are moving back to Boston. There is a large public and private investment commitment. A process of revitalization is underway in the City's neighborhoods.

Important new problems include the credit crunch and the energy crisis. Both affect construction activity and investment plans. In the long run, the energy crisis may favorably impact Boston, reaffirming its role as a central place for working, living, doing business, and communicating without travelling great distances.

(2) The scope and depth of the planning and development effort underway is large. Its purpose is the formulation of a new General Plan, successor to the 1965-75 Plan.

The intent is to establish feasible, achievable, financeable, and compatible goals, - for jobs and income, strengthening of the City's economy, revitalization of the City's neighborhoods, and other attainable objectives -, recognizing that some desirable ends would be only partially achieved at best.

Component planning efforts include the preparation of (i) a growth program for downtown, (ii) a neighborhood revitalization and development program, (iii) a public facilities plan, (iv) a housing policy and program, and (v) a city transportation plan.

In pursuit of this effort, the four sessions in the dialogue held thus far have dealt with (i) an overview of trends and prospects and plans and programs, (ii) the downtown growth program, (iii) the neighborhood strategy, and (iv) the housing policy and program.

(3) I welcomed the thoughtful observations and questions posed in the dialogue series, which will serve to make the plans better.

I noted Dun Gifford's alert to the need for forward planning to assure continuing development in the late 1970's and 1980's, beyond the projects presently planned.

I noted the response of members of the banking and insurance enterprises to the housing fix-up grogram.

I cited John Ryan's comments that the downtown growth program was achievable.

I expressed appreciation for the useful questions raised by Urban Dynamics; the need for compatibility of goals for jobs, population and housing; the recognition of trade-offs and constraints; the durability of the services revolution and the vulnerability of the City's economy; the need for industrial jobs to provide a ladder of opportunity; the importance of limiting neighborhood change; the inter-relationship of housing goals and those for jobs, population and income.

I suggested the Downtown Growth Program as a key case for public-private planning interaction, and described the program, the strategy, and the role of incentive zoning.

Dun Gifford responded to the call for collaboration, on behalf of the private sector members participating. He welcomed the invitation to take part in the large planning and development effort. He expressed the opinion that the preliminary long-range plans were desirable, achievable and well-conceived, that the planning work was commendable, and that the planning process was well-oriented.

Dun Gifford affirmed the favorable long-term prospects but expressed concern about short-term problems. He also noted that the energy crisis had already resulted in a shift to the assembly of industrial properties in the City, in place of the emphasis on suburban locations till now. He welcomed the intent of the Downtown Growth Program to establish a more objective development process through the new approach to incentive zoning.

Dun Gifford questioned the Urban Dynamics model construct of a vicious cycle of "more high rise construction, fewer blue collar business sites, fewer low-skill employment opportunities, higher unemployment, and more residents needing low-skill jobs".

John Collins endorsed the "dialogue series" planning process as the proper way toward plan formulation and program implementation, for the new "General Plan" he had heard about.

John Collins outlined "urban dynamics" as an analytic tool which looks at the City as a system, facilitating the distinction between problem symptoms and problem causes. He cited two Boston experience examples.

(1) Collins said that, in the case of the Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan, for which he was responsible, the focus on demolition and replacement of housing, the symptom, was misguided, and, if he were to do it over again, he would use the cleared land for job creation, and live with a temporary housing shortage.

(2) Collins thought that though Boston's office building boom was creating thousands of jobs, the bidding up of the cost of downtown rental space could result in the displacement of certain marginal small scale business activities. Collins also questioned the long-term durability of the services revolution.

Joe Barresi stated that he is familiar with every office building constructed in Boston since 1960, and that there has been no blue collar job displacements involved in these building sites.

Lou Alfeld apologized for not commending the fine qualities of Boston's planners and their plans in his paper whose purpose was to raise questions, and, thereby, improve the planning process. He described his paper as an attempt to project some of the long-term implications of the Plan.

Eli Post defended Boston's planning effort as rational and logical. On the question of "manhattanization", Eli noted that, to have Manhattan's office building density, Boston's Downtown would have to have 75 million square feet of office space, and that Boston, with 30 million square feet of space, isn't there yet.

Eli referred to the Columbia Point Plan as a bold new effort to make something useful and attractive out of a problem and anopportunity, through a planning program involving the community, the City, U. Mass., the private sector, and other interested parties.

Eli presented the "old" and the "new" plans for the Waterfront, describing the "new" plan as a response to the community's desire for more park space, less road space, and housing for the elderly.

Stewart Forbes said that though Boston was not up to 75 million square feet of office space yet, he was trying hard. He thought that the private sector should have spoken up to challenge the unique and unprecedented financial feasibility criteria proposed by an opponent to the Park Plaza Project at the January hearings conducted by the State Department of Community Affairs.

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Notes and Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future
Boston Project
Parkman Conference Center Program Jan. 17, 1974

Summary of the Discussion at Dinner Meeting

The following is a combination of notes and transcript. Some speakers did not wish to be recorded.

Alexander Ganz: On behalf of Robert T. Kenney, Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Alex Ganz issued a call for help and collaboration in planning and development for Boston's future. He welcomed John Collins.

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Important new problems include the credit crunch and the energy crisis. Both affect construction activity and investment plans. In the long run, the energy crisis may favorably impact Boston, reaffirming its role as a central place for working, living, doing business, and communicating without travelling great distances.

(2) The scope and depth of the planning and development effort underway is large. Its purpose is the formulation of a new General Plan, successor to the 1965-75 Plan.

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(3) Alex Ganz welcomed the thoughtful observations and questions posed in the dialogue series, which will serve to make the plans better.

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He noted the response of members of the banking and insurance enterprises to the housing fix-up grogram.

He cited John Ryan's comments that the downtown growth program was achievable.

He expressed appreciation for the useful questions raised by Urban Dynamics; the need for compatibility of goals for jobs, population and housing; the recognition of trade-offs and constraints; the durability of the services revolution and the vulnerability of the City's economy; the need for industrial jobs to provide a ladder of opportunity; the importance of limiting neighborhood change; the inter-relationship of housing goals and those for jobs, population and income.

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Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program Jan.17, 1974

Partial Summary of the discussion at dinner meeting

(Partial Transcript. Some speakers did not wish to be recorded.)

Lou Alfeld: I wrote a summary paper for this particular meeting and I do write a very short paper; try to keep it short, something I termed discussion paper for each of the luncheons. The purpose of those papers is really to raise questions in a very brief amount of space and I realize in retrospect looking at some of those and, as a matter of fact, all four of them so far, they come across sounding very critical of ongoing planning.

I am not critical of everything that's going on in the planning of Boston; I just don't have space in the paper to point out all the good things and then have space for the bad things, so I stick to a few points that I'd like to raise questions about. None of the issues that I've raised have any black and white answers and there is no right way or wrong way to do something.

I think that what I have tried to do is to point to a method of analysis and a series of questions that can be raised about anybody's planning in any city anywhere. And I don't want to wind up in a role here of being the outside critic who constantly downgrades things that are going on when it isn't either my personal feelings nor I feel the role that I could best fill here. When people have approached me on some of the papers, I've tried to point out that I really wasn't trying to knock any individuals on their planning effort or the BRA's efforts which I consider to be a very excellent planning agency.

So, if you will all read those papers with the idea that they only have value as discussion pieces and the ideas in there are only useful if you pick them up and debate them and discuss them and then we can lay some of them to rest. I keep raising issues over and over again that haven't been answered or at least, that I feel need further discussion and as we put things away other issues will come up.

Just in terms of an overview of where we're headed with all of these luncheon meetings, we have a great many topics that will be covered over the next few months. My effort is to pick up each little segment of the system with a few questions about, trying to relate that to what we've already talked about, rather than trying to jump ahead and look at everything at one time. It's an educational process as much for me as it is for you, therefore, I may put out these papers for some cryptic little feedback loops that look like squirrels running around a tree without any answers because we haven't yet gotten to other parts of the system which may also be affecting that.

If there are any questions about papers - when you get them and read them and want to call or write a note or bring it up discussion, you should be encouraged to do that. In reference to the particular diagram that I drew on Pg. 8 of the summary paper for today, it shows that sort of a vicious cycle between the development, high-rise development of the city, a loss of low-skilled jobs for much of its under-employed population, there's a hypothesis about a phenomena that we have witnessed occurring in New York City over the last 20 yrs. and this does seem to have some validity in development of some of our major American cities. This, by no means, means that's definitely going to happen in Boston or that by recognizing the hypothesis for what it is as one way of explaining events that we can't take steps to avoid it. I think that viscious cycle that I've drawn could be easily broken for example, if zoning for the city, let's say, allowed a certain amount of land to be developed as high-rise buildings and at the same time took account of the fact that land prices may be increasing in a certain area, certain other jobs may be lost; we can look and find out what's being lost and try to then replace that or replace jobs by rezoning other areas of the city strictly for the industrial park type of development are the kind of things that Jerry Bush's office has been working on recently. What's I'm trying to push for is to raise questions that will allow us to achieve a

planning balance between all the different elements that go into a city. Too often everyone in society tends to focus on one issue at a time and pursue that for awhile until something else becomes a problem and then you pursue that. The only real insights that urban dynamics offers I think is looking at all of those problems as being related and are not really a sequential happenings in time that are completly random, but they're all inter-related and we might now be able to work on problems that aren't problems yet - to avoid them becoming problems in the future. I have as much of an interest in seeing a better Boston as all of you do. Let the BRA continue with their presentation, unless there are any questions.

The job-skill match

Question: I think it anticipates the meeting that's coming up and I mentioned this to you a little before coming in here to dinner - there's certainly a considerable emphasis placed in your paper on the significace of jobs and the possible threat that with X number of jobs being developed in the City of Boston in the next 10 yrs., that these jobs can logically and perhaps most easily be filled by people who would commute into the city, while we still have residents in the city, a lot of unemployed people perhaps of lo skill who, it seems to me, are left hanging here unless we think in much more specific terms about what is the nature of these jobs. What is the skill demand of the jobs? Who can assume some responsibility in taking the unskilled people in the city that now exist or that may exist in the forseeable future and with a certain knowledge of lead time, start the training to get them in shape so that they will logically flow into these vacan positions? I found that in reading the paper that I was constantly putting notes in the margin - what jobs? what skills? and this kind of thing and I hope very much next week we can get zeroed down on that into much more specifics.

Lou: As I read the paper I go back to the phenomena talked about that on Pg. 8; I recogni that that's a hypothesis, but - and it may have been valid in New York City, but I wonder if the hypothesis is valid in the City of Boston. In other words, we see more high-rise construction. High-rise construction, for example, has been taking place does not, I don't believe, replace blue collar facilities; facilities that are blue collar type jobs, they primarily replace white collar type jobs. All the high-rise construction, and I guess we're talking primarily commerical high-rise and not residential high-rise; that kind of high rise is not really, or maybe I'm off, but I go back as far as you and father probably and I think back to at least the Prudential and from Prúdential to the present, most of the high-rise construction has not replaced facilities which have blue collar jobs.

That is probably true, but I think there's been a secondary thing that has it's consequence perhaps in increased land cost and areas not too far removed from some of the high-rise construction which might inhibit the ability to use it for industrial jobs. It might be too high-priced as a consequence of high-rise development to permit the labor intensive opportunity to develop without some artificial assistance.

Does High Rise development Replace Blue Collar jobs

Question: But I got through the thread of this and I'm one of the last ones in this group and all I've read is this: I haven't read the other paper: I got that all through the thread of this you were talking about creating job opportunities, blue collar job opportunities in residential areas so that people who lived in the city could have ready access to those jobs. Therefore, I visualized those blue collar jobs, those industries as being - buildings being built in residential areas and not downtown. Therefore, this hypothesis disturbed me.

Answer: Well, I think that we need exactly these kinds of questions to sharpen that hypothesis and decide how seriously we need take the hypothesis as far as the planning of Boston's future goes. There has been certainly a rise in land prices, there has been a great change in the character of the downtown plan. One thinks of the area around South Station, for example, one area that I remember driving past on my way to Army Reserve Meetings, down at the Boston Army Base many times, as an area that at one time had a great many blue collar jobs, as the area deteriorated further it became warehouses and marginal employment.

But what that represents from an urban dynamics standpoint is a gradual deterioration of a blue collar job base in the city, whether from natural forces from just aging or from rising land prices. But the process of aging, which causes the city to begin to lose

its tax base and to attract let's say, a pool of underempolyed people that live in a city, concentrate there, what I'd like more identified is the pressure in terms of taxes and in re-development, which goes largely into the more profitable high-rise type of structures, rather than replacing what is gradually a deteriorating blue collar job base. Now, it doesn't, I guess in a larger sense, I'm not talking about the building itself sitting on the site where the blue collar job was, but if one only thinks about the planning energy and everyone invloved in it and all the finance and everything else that goes into putting up a high-rise office building, that's an opportunity cost. That same amount of energy might go to industrial park. Look at the difficulities Jerry Bush has had getting that little park in Dorchester off of the ground. Yet, you know, maybe 10 ti that amount of effort would have produced more jobs in the city. There is a relationship between our limited resources, between the actions that we take today in terms of changing the face of the city and in terms of who's going to be able to live and work in the city in the future, and I'm trying to identify as many of those interactions as I can to bring them out for group discussion and thought and to see if we can't better integrate these processes into our plans to avoid problems in the future.

Take that, Joe, as you and I are looking back over our shoulder, think back to the blue collar job base that existed in the area which was supplanted by the central artery. The driving out of the City of Boston of business by the central artery, in addition t the creation of 128, led to the fertilization of 128 with blue collar job opportunities that had been in Boston. Those really have not been replaced. And, the fact that, I don't know whether the figure is 1 of 3 in high-rise building jobs which go to residents, or we can argue what that figure is. But if it's 1 in 3, then 2 of 3 commute. Those 2 of 3 place additional strains on transportation of all kinds, highways as well as mass transit. And theresource costs, the opportunity costs, which we'll be able to direct some of the job creating mechanisms we might be a little better off. I think one important thing is that these high-rise buildings in themselves are maybe not the way we should think about it. The jobs that exist in the high-rise buildings, require job skills that the underemployed in the city tend not to have, so that the people who work in these high-rise buildings tend to be commuters.

Hank: You know the larger point about this goes to what Alex's long-range trends are showing, confirmed, I think by you, Lou, that Boston is becoming increasingly a service oriented employment center. Now what happens with the Federal Reserve site which used to be a very heavy printing center? Now, I don't know where a lot of those companies went, a lot of them went furthur into the Boston Wharf Industrial Park, they just moved across the channel, but the replacement of that with equal jobs which are probably considerably higher salary. I don't know what happened in that situation in terms of the jobs in Boston, whether there was a net loss or a net gain?

Answer: There has been a standoff. Printing it's the largest manufacturing industry in Boston and it's held its own thus far. There are some examples today of blue collar industries in the city with no serious development pressure that one still disappearing so that Lou's hypothesis is not universal. Because of perhaps the aging process, impacts on them very strongly. And one thinks about the aging building less productive, less efficient and the alternatives to pouring money back into an existing structure or building a new one-story plant on 128, then we see some of the reasons for that. That's what happened in the early fifties; you know in So. Boston and places like that, their buildings aged, they didn't, no one put any effort into providing a building which they could then use efficiently and economically and they went out to 128, you know they weren't going to stay in the city and go up, they wanted buildings that were horizontal. If the Boston Wharf area was not there to accommodate the printing plants that were on the federal reserve site, they wouldn't be in Boston.

Industrial Jobs in the City

Mr. Gordon: ...some challenge whether you should have the industrial jobs in the city anyw

Answer: Of course we do and that's a point that we ought to debate and we ought to debate vigorously.

Dun Gifford: You know on that point, one of the things that the oil shortage has done: CC&F is probably the largest builder of industrial parks in the country, there's no question about it. We are now as rapidly as we can trying to acquire center city sites for industry, because the potential has swung back again. It took the trigger of the oil

shortage to do it and all of a sudden because of that trigger it now becomes a very attractive investment opportunity based on the per sq. foot land cost.

Whether it should or not it maybe something Alex, you guys ought to be really banging on becasue it's going to happen.

Alex: We're trying to bring some industrial jobs to the city, we're working very vigorous in the Columbia Point area, in the Southwest Corridor Project, in the Boston Navy Yard regions and Jerry Bush's work centers in other places. And we think we can make some ga recongizing that at best these would be very secondary to the job gains of the service activities. There's been a great expression of interest, reacting to what Mr. Gordon sa by a lot of people in Lowell thinking about the difficulities which the people who live Lowell will have getting to their places of employment on 128 or 495; by the people who own factories to move the factories into Lowell where the people can get more readily to them. This is another indication that the energy shortage is going to perhaps lead us in the direction of having place of residence, place of employment, relatively close to one another.

Mr. Gordon, the question is whether or not we should place emphasis on industrial jobs. It is certainly something that we ought to look into because the question has been raised and you people hare could cast a good deal of light on it as to whether or not the servic industry taken as a whole are exceptions to any generalization, might be one of the most vulnerable sectors of our economy to an economic turndown. If we were to get into a severe recession and the service industry suffered dramatically from it, Boston and Manhattan could have extremely high vacancy rates and serious difficulities though the question of industrial employment is a hedge against that sort of thing. We ignore the housing and that's way the state in its economic policies sets housing so far down. The only way you're going to get suburban low income housing is to tie it to the economic carrot. You put a plant in the suburbs, have the people out there rather than always think of bringing people to the jobs. Since, of course, the plants are out there and the opportunity to build the housing exists and all of the reasons why the housing doesn't follow the plants, are both complex and clear. A few of these are going to be closing down and you'll lose some tax dollars, then you can start taking another look at things.

Eli Post: I really have no quarrel with what Lou said earlier tonight. Urban Dynamics dc systematically raise the questions. But, I don't think we ought to be seduced into believing that there's an easy answer to the problems that are raised and numerous people have made that type of quarrel with Urban Dynamics, that Urban Dynamics is much better at raising the questions and responding to them. This paper literally implies that Alex, myself and other of the BRA are like squirrels running around a tree, not knowing where to begin or when to stop. We're not illogical, we're not opposed to a comprehensive view, it's just that very often when a point is made here, I sit here wondering if somebody were to ask me to respond and most of the time I just feel like saying, "I know the question very well, we don't have an answer". We've thought about it and tried to deal with it, but some of these don't lend themselves to easy resolution and I'm glad Lou said what he did in discussion with Mayor Collins that there's no question that the BRA in Boston and everywhere around this country would have to approach these issues on a much more comprehensive way; that we have to stop dealing with the development and planning the traditional way of just building more and bigger and assume that's better.

This is not the case; there are side effects of any one decision of any sets of policies that may have greater consequences than the policies, themselves and we ought to start recognizing it. Downtown we're beginning to do that. I talked at one of the luncheons about our growth program talked earlier about incentive zoning and later in a month or so we'll have a document that shows, I think, that we can deal with Dynamics and downtown in a much more logical way than was the case in the past. I don't agree with Lou that we're beginning to Manhattanize Boston, that we're going about Willie, Nillie, trying to capture as much development as possible.

We are concerned now with development, but with its effect on environment and trying to acheive a proper balance. Boston is nowhere near Manhattan yet in terms of the problems that a large city has. Boston's got 25 million sq. feet of office space in it's downtown, Manhatten has 250 million sq. feet of office s in its downtown. So that there is a difference of scales, which is pheonomenal, 25

million as opposed to 250 million. If you look at the densities of we've got about 6 million sq. feet of office space per sq. mile and New York has 28 million sq. feet of office space a sq. mile. If you work that backwards, Boston has to build another 75 million sq. feet of office space before it's fully Manhattanized. We're a long ways from that; it's not going to happen tomorrow. So, I don't think the analysis works in two ways: we're not going the Manhattan route simply in terms of numbers and second in terms of our philisophy or our policies; we're concerned about those sorts of issues and are trying to deal with them very constructively.

That's a very intelligent way to look at it and the use of the word Manhattanization is calculated, I suppose, to both attrach the attention and scare the reader. However, as you very well know, 43 sq. miles of Boston as contrasted with the geographic area of New York, the 650,000 people in Boston vs. the 8 million in New York, there fore the 10 to 1 ratio of Manhattanization is not quite so far from Boston, so everything is a matter of scale. Now, I don't know when Boston becomes Manhattanized. Is it when traffic stops on the Southeast Expressway? Do we then conclude that Boston has been Manhattanized, or when we build 3 more office buildings in town and we have arrived at the State Street Subway Station, with people punching one another trying to get off - is that Manhattanized? Does it become Manhattanized when you have possible situations on a highway or in a subway station and we want to deal with that. We want to relate office buildings to the capacity of the subway station in that area; we want to talk about the consequences of the new buildings in terms of the roads. We now begin to have the tools to handle that and want to try to amend our way of doing business, amend the zoning laws so that we make these policies binding on future developments. I think we cam begin to do that.

Columbia Point

Columbia Point, I think is a popular effort by the city to try and deal with a very long-standing nagging problem; mainly a section of the city which by virtuous of this location, it's proximity to downtown and its access to Mass Transit ought to be one of the most desired neighborhoods in town, but as we all know, Columbia Point has quite a different image. The last two decades the Housingreject has dominated that part of town and I don't think I have to elaborate on the image that has been made. U. Mass. now has a major plant on the site, ultimately there will be some 15,000 students and faculty, and the presence of U. Mass dramatically changes the long-term potential. What we tried to do here is show that Columbia Point does not have to be what it was. The trends of the past do not have to continue, that with some youthship, foresight, imagination, cash, it can be different. It can be a major community, it can't continue to have low-rent residents, but that other people can move in as well to create a new community containing around 4,000 apartments, a town center, shopping, alongside the university. It's a beginning, not an end. It's a brochure that starts something you think can happen, it's far from sure. You take a lot of money, a lot of politics, a lot of cooperation to see that happen. As we all know, the city is not carved out by timid men and sometimes you've got into something that's kind of indicated. You think about Columbia Point and you say,"My god, that's just going to keep on going down and down and down". Sometimes you've just got to get in there and tell us something that's so big, so bold that you can just undo the current image, the conventional wisdom and recreate something that this potential really has been lost because of some of the things that have been printed on the front page of the Globe and elsewhere.

Q: What's the vacancy ratio on Columbia Point?

A: 1/3.

Q: Why don't we tear down that 1/3 of the apartments?

A: That is possibly something that may come out of this concept.

Q: They just can't be used anymore?

A: Nobody wants to use them; they haven't wanted to use them for 5,6,8 to 10 years. I don't know what the current waiting list is for housing is, 5,000, 6,000, I don't know what it is, 5,000 people waiting for housing and 1/3 of the units empty. Not only in Columbia Point, but in some other housing developments.

Q: What's the trend?

Andy: Well, specifically in terms of Columbia Point, I think it's relatively stable right now at about between 900 and 1,000 occupied units out of 1,500 in the development.

This didn't balance between the size of the units vacant over there and the demand; the vacants are 1 and 2 bedrooms and the demands are for something considerably larger. But in this study, you have a two-sided thing going here; you have the plan, the substance; we talked a bit of process before and I think that also was quite important in this particular document at this time. It is the first time as Mayor Collins suggested that a community that in the past has totally turned its back toward any kind of governmental intervention into it's neighborhood. South Boston, for instance. And some parts of Dorchester and the people from Columbia Point Project, plus the city, plus the universit and its structure, both the President's office and the Chancellor's Office have got together in the same room in a period of 6 months - yelled at each other, cursed each other, a couple of meetings went running out the door after each other, but ultimately got down and said that's something we can all agree on as an appropriate objective and let's at least start together with a feeling of trust and confidence in each other and push toward that kind of dream; that's the process and I think that's the important lesson of this document. I don't know where we're going to go with it; it is our dream, it's our hope - As Eli suggests you have to start somewhere and that image of Columbia Point as whatever that symbolizes in the first direction anybody in the school, you'd probably have it. There's more to it than that and that's what we're trying to sell. I think, by the way, this is another one of your luncheon agendas about a month from now, I would welcome the opportunity to talk specifically about this proposal.

You know, one other-thing while we're talking about processes, Andy, the luncheons are great and the dinners are even better, but we should not avoid the opportunity for us to have one to one meetings between meetings. It seems to me that there might be some of you who have particular questions you might want to take up with Lou Alfeld or you might want to get together with Lou before the luncheon. It seems to me that we ought to avail ourselves of the opportunity for small meetings, individual meetings, task forces, sub-structures, some other mechanism to increase the productivity of your luncheons. As you probably know as a result of our meeting last week on housing, we just couldn't finish it at that lunch. Those that were interested in that issue are going to have to get together outside.

Stewart Forbes: My perspective is a little different than the one Eli is referring to. I guess I would take Eli's comments and say only 75 million more sq. feet to go, but process, as Andy refers to is one that I really think we're making some progress on. Fro my side of it, it's fine to define economic reality, whatever that means, but it's essentially dealing with what I consider a feasibility of certain development schemes. I wanted to speak just briefly tonight to try and point you and not so much an alternati but make you aware that there was another side to the kind of imputs that the business community can make, essentially in this process, you're being harnessed to a planning effort. I would maintain that there is an equal need to harness your professionalism and your expertise to a development process. I don't consider the two mutually exclusive at all, I don't draw a line between development and planning; I think the two have to be inter-related as everyone would agree, but we are in a situation, it seems to me, where we are having an increasing demand by the public to control development and this means that the administration of that control which is primarily in the hands of the BRA and this city is going to become increasingly under criticism and under increasing scrutiny. Just because it will become more controversial. And what I find, myself, in constant need of is authentication of claims by a developer; we're constantly in a situation where a planning objective is set, a developer comes in and maintains that he can not possibly meet that requirement and we begin to compromise. In many cases in the past, the economic benefits of the immediate development have offset some of the planning objectives and developments have proceeded. I'm not saying that's been bad, but I do see the pendulum has swung the other way now where you have environmental interest, people who are against renewal, people who are against development and it's going to come a time when that planning objective stands up and development doesn't take place and the developer's bluff so to speak is called. Seeing the potential for those type of confrontations leads me to the point where I don't like to be a situation where we arbitrarily, not necessarily arbitrarily, but based on very imperfect information are put in a situation of having to evaluate the information and it's sketchy information provided to us by the developer. I look to developing eventually

the kind of confidence in a process where the developer is confident that he can give us full information and where we have the contact with the business communtiy where we can at least informally seek out and obtain the kind of verification of that information that is necessary to make decisions and make compromises.

What I am essentially pointing out, I think, is a need for a professional constituency that supports the development process. I don't feel we have that yet. I think part of it is because we haven't developed a development process. I don't think we've defined it in a manner that's visible and considered objective and something that has the confidence of the community. But it also questioned whether or not the business community had really responded to some of the development issues that have been raised, particularly during the last 6 months.

We have our favorite project, Park Plaza. We've continually been forced to come down one side or the other on that particular question, are you for it, against it or what. There are really many very substantive issues in Park Plaza which could bear very significantly on development in the future in the city. It's a shame that out of the course of hearings we have not had more discussion about these types of issues. The kind of thing recently that has come up, just to give you an example, is the level of financial details required to support the findings of financial soundness required of the urban renewal plan. We've had expert testimony from witnesses that have been brought out by the opposition, it lays out very specific criteria for loan commitment. There's something that's quite different than the criteria that should be applied to an urban renewal plan. It's a very good question. It could be raised as what is the level of detail that's necessary.

The kind of thing that could be very helpful is to have in the business community a group of professionals, lenders, developers who could respond to that not in the context of Park Plaza, being for or against, but in the context of that specific issue. And I guess in closing, what I'm trying to put in your head is the thought that there is a need for a commitment from the business community to assist and stimulate this type of constituency and with it goes a willingness to examine the kind of mechanism that we use today. The kind of mechanism that we're using to harness the business community to assist in governmental type decisions. This group is very unique. We tend to grap at the heads of major corporations, many of whom have little time to get involved in the details of a particular issue and become of their particular positions find it very difficult to take a public position. I'm not sure that what we're looking for isn't a slightly different type of individual to involve in the governmental process - public, private dialogue. And that is a person who has the confidence of those particular individuals in leadership position, but who isn't necessarily faced with the same type of pressures and whose participation in this type of a dialogue and say as a member of a professional constituency for a development process is to do the homework and to deal with the issues.

t: Now that's a very interesting series of comments and still there were some ways in the past in which we endeavored to deal with this kind of project. For example, I meant to ask you when you were up there whether or not you had named the Waterfront Park the Frank Christian Park. I think the BRA has done that have they not? Well I think they've passed some sort of a resolution a year or so ago. He was the Chariman of the Waterfront Development Commission and on that basis he brought together a group of leaders from downtown, not necessarily the chief of companies, they hired a professional; they in fact, paid for, with their own funds, the plan for the Waterfront, which was submitted to the BRA. The same thing was done with respect to the Committee for Central Business District. You might be well advised to consider that sort of relationship and develop the areas of competence and exchange of information within that sort of structure, because it's extrenely difficult to ask Hatfield to pass on McCoy's plan.

Comment: That's what I say, I think you ought to get away from the concept of a specific project into agreement on standards, criterian and specific issues. I think the downtown plan will give us a very good mechanism to try and stimulate this process.

Hank: Let me just say that I'm so pleased to see Ed Sullivan here, he's been gracious enough to come to the whole meeting and he hasn't had an opportunity to say a word. Ed, I want to think you for being here and if you have something to say, I'd sure like to here you say it.

Ed Sullivan: Well, I think the most approporiate thing I could do would be to thank you for coming, not duplicate what you said. We very much appreciate John Collins' coming here, we respect his wisdom and any contribution he can make in the years ahead. I've been listening because I'm very interested in what Urban Dynamics can do for the city and I have been for a long time. I think that this is probably the most valuable thing the city could add to its planning expertise, the input of Urban Dynamics, so I'm really looking forward with a great deal of anticipation to the results of this process.

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program Feb. 7, 1974

Navy Yard Reuse

Gerry Bush: The base was closed on April 17th by the then Secretary of Defense, Elliott Richardson. On the 18th we started asking for money, when I say we it is the group that basically came together is a combination of the BRA staff and our staff: the economic development corporation. We do have a city wide task force and neighborhood advisory groups, but the base is a phenomenon in the development of the city which is unequaled, in my opinion by anything except perhaps the fire in 1867, or the 36 years to make the Back Bay fill.

Basically it is 220 acres of real estate in Charlestown and South Boston; 130 acres of water and 7.3 million sq. ft. of buildings. One building alone, the army base building which will be declared surplus in the South Boston site, is 1,651,000 sq. ft. of space. The New England Merchants is about 800,000 sq. ft. of space, to give you a comparision. The Prudential Center is 31 acres and 3.5 million sq. ft. of space. So the real estate is 10 times the size of the Prudential Center. The buildings in place now are twice the size of the entire Prudential Tower. The Park Plaza project is 35 acres, so just in terms of size it's substantial.

In terms of employment there were 20,000 employees there during the Second World War, the defense department cut it down to 5,600 in April, and it's down to about 1,000 now, Everyone will be laid off by the end of May or June, they're slipping a little on their closing schedule. So we'll have zero employment there. In a redevelopment program if we could have everybody's best hope come in we might have 20,000 jobs.

The cost of the base is of course a political process if indeed a public agency buys it. The GSA now has title on the property. They will notify the state and the city that it is available and ask if we want to purchase it. If we pay rock bottom prices for the dollar per sq. ft. for the building, you're talking about $15,000,000 - 50¢ per sq. ft. for the land, 10¢ for the water and $1.00 for the buildings. If you pay fair market value, that is if you compare all the space to recent industrial sales at around $4.00 per sq. ft. for the buildings and $3 to $4 for the land, and 50¢ for the water, you're going to be paying $53,000,000. There' some heavy machinery that will be left. The layout of the facility is very antique to say the least.

The good land is in South Boston, all the equipment is in Charlestown. At this point we are following two, not necessarily opposing policies, but we're following two paths in an attempt to get a handle on the problem of this magnitude. One of which is characterised as an ntreprenurial solution to the problem, this is why I was so anxious to speak with this group and indeed with any of your institutions where you think it might be worth while. We've talked with three of the four banks. We've talked with three or four chamber groups, trying to make the private sector in the city aware of the base in some detail, so that when they know of deals being made in the private sector, they will be thinking about the base as a possible physical site for new operations or expanded operations.

The entreprenurial solution involves ship building. There has been a substantial amount of unfortunate publicity about the Boston Ship Building Corp. We continue to work with them to see if indeed we can get ship building started. Another major ship builder was in yesterday, who's very interested in going forward. It's his opinion that he needs $200,000,000 in new ship orders, to go ahead he feels he can develop that in about 60 days. There is no capacity in ship yards today. If you can guarantee delivery or promise delivery, by 1976 or 1977, there are all kinds of people out there who will give you orders. If you can get that piece together with the capital that's required, then you can start ship building on a shoe string. If we can get the real estate delivered. Those three pieces go together, two of which have to happen in the private sector and only one in the public sector. Then we indeed will create 45,000 jobs in the long term, about 1,500 immediately and utilize about 80% of the physical real estate.

On that same notion, we have a contract with Arthur D. Little, examining in a preliminary way thefeasibility of what we call a medical/dental/pharmaceutical product center. The concept that they're looking at is a trademart for medical, dental, pharmaceutical products. There is no such institution in the U.S. there's none in the world, where a doctor, a hospital administrator, the nurses etc., the food service people can go to one physical location and look at the variety of products that are available to them. It's the model of the furniture mart in Chicago, which a substantial in percent of the wholesale transactions take place. Manufacturing may have been in South Carolina, but the retailor goes to Chicago to look at everything that is available. We are interviewing suppliers andmanufacturers to test whethe or not there's something in the market that has prevented it from happening before. It seem like a fundamentally good idea, why hasn't it happened? We're trying to find out why it has happened of we can. If not, HEW has told us they would put in a regional training center in the Charlestown sector, and we could in fact preserve the facade of the ship yard and that use would be the most compatible with the park.

Marcia will talk more about the South End of the Charlestown yard which we hope will become the U.S.S. Constitution park.

The entrepreneurial third soultion, which is even more far fetched, is a proposal which we received yesterday to work out a "Hertz Rent A Boat" for commercial fishing. No onw has spent a lot of time on the economics of the fishing industry, but one of the problems is the high capital cost. If we could create a kind of an institution to manufacture fishing vessels, and lease them to operators you put in a tremendous amount of leverage at two or th critical points in the economics of fishing industry.

That's one tack we're one. Is there enough energy and risk taking in the private secto Can we connect to someone who has an idea or a concept and the private capital large enough do something worthwile with the base?

Simultaneously, we have let contracts to do what I call the plan and developmental appr If we get into that program it will take at least a decade. Brooklyn has been sitting there for 10 years, about 40% utilized now. Watertown in our own backyard has been there for 5 years. But of course what you can do with it depends in large part what you pay for it. Ou opinion is that they paid $22M too much for Brooklyn. Watertown paid about $5M too much for that facility. These two buildings are basically rentless, and if they sit idle they're nak because of the destruction that sets in rapidly. So we're simultaneously trying to put our eggs in two baskets. One is developing our plan, which interfaces well with the a butting communities, and talks about highest and best use. And we're trying to get real capital use there so that the plan doesn't become totally unreal. If both those fail, I don't know what going to happen. If the problem gets defined as Kevin White's then the region is in real trouble. If the citizens of the area say this is the politicans problem, it will be a grevious error. There is no way that city or state government can solve those problems. We are going to have to identify uses and sources of private capital, in order to convert these facilities. We don't have that kind of bread in the city hall. The implications of our putting out $53M in general obligation funds, is staggering. In order to own a piece of real estate that has a $4M a year maintenancetag on it with nothing going on, and just to preserve it, it will cost $4M per year. There are other problems with it, the telephone and electric wires are in the same conduit, so those two systems must be segregated, because the telephone company won't repair facilities that are intergrated, that's probably a $2M ticket It costs $1M a year to just run the power plant in Charlestown. Nobody knows how the oil gets from the storage tanks to the furnace. Whan a facility that was created in 1790 and ha grown through all the wars that have been fought since then is closed it is a mess. Let me show you some of the mess. (SLIDES OF FACILITIES WERE SHOWN.)

This was a very superficial ride through there, the purpose all of which is to see the size and complexity of the place. It's a great development opportunity for the city. When you get high on whatever you get high on, you can imagine all kinds of wonderful things happening in terms of new employment, new employment, new tax generation.

More on the positive side, things that we hope can happen, and I hope will happen in which we're down to a fairly detailed level of planning, is the U.S.S. Constitution Park, that Marshall from the BRA has been working with almost full time since April. The BRA had done some preliminary planning a couple of years ahead on this venture.

SALE PRICE

Question: The reuse sale price, has that been established?

Gerry Bush: No, the GSA took title and control of the property last week. They will price i now.

Question: On what basis, reuse ot present use?

Gerry Bush: They will appraise it on the highest use, which is somebody's idea. We have already offered to take it if they'll pay us $25M. I have not been anxious to bring that to a head, I am anxious to slow down the federal process rather than speed them up. Even though defense keeps saying speed it up, it's in your interest to get it immediately. I would rather defense hold it, because it's really a hot potato, as long as they've got a hold of it we've got some time to do things.

New Speaker: In New York City the annual capital budget is several hundred million dollars a year, so they were prepared to take a risk and spend the $50 odd million of their own money to purchase the navy yard outright.

USE BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

New Speaker: One other question, the school department I understand has an interest in the naval yard annex for an occupational resource center. I don't know whether they're working with you or working individually.

Gerry Bush: Individually. It's a silly situation, it could only happen in Boston. Kerrigan some months ago, said he wanted to take over all of Charlestown for educational use. I said can we try to sit down and analyse it. I found out that they want a million sq. ft. to take the ORC and put it into Charlestown. We gave a tour to all their membership, and we never heard back from them, and the only communications we had are the newspapers. Every time I read the newspaper I call Kerrigna's office and ask what do you want to do.

New Speaker: The ship building thing, they're talking about the entire base in Charlestown and South Boston?

New Speaker: We're talking about 50% of Charlestown area and all of South Boston

IS SHIP BUILDING A GOOD IDEA?

New Speaker: Okay, forget Marshall's plan but in essence it couldn't be anything except a foundation and the ship yards, is that right? Does this still make sense to you, to use all the land for a ship building operation?

Gerry Bush: No it doesn't, in an abstract way. But in a concrete way the answer is yes it does. If I were in an economy where anything were predictable so you could get raw materials and morgage money. If we had some national policy where we were predicting some substantial growth in the New England regional economy, a mix of light manufacturing and assembly, a mixture of development, would be a much more progressive thing for the city. Our office is predicting and realizes there is some controversy between the two city agencies - a decrease in regional gross product.

We know when we surveyed private businessmen about expansion, that they're thinking about it but they're postponing those decisions until something firms up. They ask will I be able to get energy? Can I get steam? What are my costs going to be? In this kind of environment a mixture of development doesn't seem to be very real. And therefore ship building which we know has peaks and valleys, and is not a terribly labor intensive effort is viable. If it can happen it will give us a decade before we have to want some other kind of a reuse. And if it's very successful and continues to grow, it is a good employer. It's like an 80 year old man when asked how he feels about being 90 says "well given the alternative it's great." We don't have a whole lot of alternatives, since April there's been a lot of publicity about the base. We have in hand interest expressed in about a million sq. ft. We've done a lot of talking about this but still we've only created 1/7 of the interest level. We've created no other comprehensive interest. The only other comprehensive concept is the medical center, and it's only a concept.

New Speaker: Does Drapper ever come back to you?

Gerry Bush: No, Drapper was looking at 500,000 sq. ft. I have been led to believe they have a very tempting development proposal on the desk. They've hired local experts to evaluate it against all others. It seems that that conclusion will favor that new development, they want to be very realistic. I should also say the Massport Authority, which is in and around Boston, is interested in 11 acres in South Boston, to tear down the fish pier and relocate the fish pier there. They want to see the figures before they say yes. Paul has been saying well we can't do the numbers until Gerry tells us you can have that real estate. I say I can't tell you about real estate because I don't know if- so why don't you get your numbers and we keep yelling and screaming at each other. If we don't get ship building and fishing, a new piece of real estate dedicated to fish processing would be a viable solution. The Coast Guard is very interested in exactly the same piece of real estate, only they want 25 acres. They're now on 4.4 acre parcel in Mattapan. We would like to see them out. With no increase in jobs, no increase in services, the Coast Guard wants to go 4.4 acres to 25 acres. It seems universal to us, and it's the kind of a decision only a public agency would give, no private one would. We have to date opposed that because it's 25 acres of good real estate that would be tax exempt. We are kind of opposed to Massport in all of this because it is sometimes difficult in knowing what Massport has. We want land taxable, and want to create employment, and given their track record in South Boston, for they own almost all of South B now, it's all mainly warehousing and the Pappas development in South Boston on Massport leas have mainly been warehouses, we're going to try to create more employment, We are not anxi for Massport to take the acres, from the city of Boston and take it out of taxation, no tax come from fisheries.

Paul: Not now, when they took it under their original act those properties were tax exempt.

Gerry: What we said Paul, we are looking at a container port in South Boston. I don't know a container port is needed. There are two studies, Massport's says yes and ours says no. Somewhere in between there is probably the truth. The impact in terms of truck traffic is very heavy, and there is very little employment. So Boston is going to have to subsidize the port facilities so New Hampshire manufacturerscan get their goods to Europe faster. You feel a little used in that process, because there are no jobs and no taxes.

New Speaker: The Port has never asked you for the entire South Boston facility.

Gerry: No. They talked about the fishing industry.

New Speaker: The fishing industry is 11 but maybe up to 25...

Gerry: They said they will pick that up.

New Speaker: They always said they would pay full taxes.

Gerry: Now the issue is the East Boston Container facility, is South Boston a better site for that or is it better outside...

New Speaker: But that's not part of the naval base.

Gerry: The South Boston site is looked at by the Maynard Study which Massport commissioned t find a place for the facility.

New Speaker: They threw it out and said it should be over on the East Boston site.

Gerry: We have the word that South Boston comes out very strongly in that competition.

New Speaker: Not according to the report.

THE U.S.S. CONSTITUTION PARK

Marcia Myers:The idea came out of the Charlestown community about 4 years ago, they were concerned because they had heard the operations in Charlestown were going to move to South Boston, what was going to become of the Constitution, there was a proposal for the constitut to be at long wharf. Charlestown didn't like that at all. They came to the BRA and said do move the Constitution. We did a study and found that in fact the ship yard is s significant sight and worthy of conclusion in the parks system. 1973 and the base closing and the idea came up again and we then brought BRA proposal up to date, and submitted it again to the nat parks service. The parks service had been encouraged by the navy to create a park in about of the land area of the ship yard. The parks service carried out a preliminary management and use study and is preparing a more detailed plan, management, operating and budget to tak to Congress in the spring.

It looks pretty good, the parks system said this has been one of the most unusual proposals for a new addition to the national parks system in that there is no opposition. I brief, what it does is features Constitution but goes further. It does have in cooperation with the U.S.S. Constitution foundation a museum which will expand the exhibit which will be made into a ship. But then in addition there will be exbibits pertaining to the history of ship yards, the dry dock, and the other facilities. The attention on our part being that we would hope that not only Constitution be enhanced but that we can extent the time of the visit to the Constitution and therefore to the city from approximatly 1/2 hour trip to a half a day visit. Things look fairly good as far as planners are concerned we hope that pa of this will be in to the ship yard within the next year.

New Speaker: There will be a concerted effort on our part to solicite your support, and we'l be back to you. We are going to have to develop community support for the park.

New Speaker: Now has the national parks association set up a New England regional headquarte here yet?

Marcia: Yes, they have a headquarters and have moved in.

New Speaker: This means they would consolidate the permanent New England base here.

Marcia: Yes, I think that was a separate move but it does show both the Charlestown side an the Boston National Park, six sites and the freedom trail.

New Speaker: Next question, how do you really, using the navy personnel, have they made any commitments about maintaining the Constitution?

Marcia: Yes, there will be a cooperative agreement, the navy will maintain the ship.

Gerry: Ten more words on that ship building idea, it's precisely why I've been talking to banks and insurance companies, and chamber of commerce groups hoping that somebody out there if somebody else wants to come in and work with us to develop the mixture of manufacturing other stuff, we've got to find them. Somebody in the private sector has got to come to us.

New Speaker: I agree with what you're stating, but what distressed me is that Boston ship building is insisting that they've got to have the entire area or they can't operate.

Gerry: You mean all of South Boston...

New Speaker: All of South Boston, and what you can give them in Charlestown so if you listen to Lloyd there's no room for anything else, period, I don't happen to agree with it, but I'm just curious.

Gerry: When you really get down to dollars and cents he won't agree with it, because he's going to have to lease that space, he's not going to be leasing space he doesn't want.

Hank Emerson: Chip, any similarities between this and Textile Mills?

Chip: Too many. You take valuable real estate with structural albatrosses, so I guess the paralel between Boston and New York in its limited fiscal ability certainly continues when you talk about Lowell. Most people agree that it would be nice to clear away some of the land the mills stand on and make available some of the contributions of the cost of turning out those mills is really prohibitive. They were built six feet thick at the base, and the facilities are pretty out dated. The cost of tearing them down, each mill is something in excess of $1M, and the city doesn't seem to be talking too seriously about spending a million dollars on the hope that some revestment will reoccur in the future.

New Speaker: The only thing that they've got that the Boston navy yard doesn't have is they don't have the 45 foot ceilings, they have 4 and 6 foot ceilings. They have a whole floor of 4 foot ceilings where they used to store cotton bales. It's hard to find people small enough to work there.

Hank: Do you want to wind up the city's presentation?

Gerry: The only other thing I want to point out is if you have other groups, if you think the slide show and just a presentation on the base would be helpful to your constiuents, or your company or some professional group, please ask.

In May the navy's out. GSA has it now, the Title 10, which is a formal congressional body finding it clear, so it's now at GSA. GSA is in the process of gearing up the appraisal. When things will happen depends on whether we sue, or whether we go in fast or slow, it's a political process. GSA is the disposition agency, within 30 to 60 days they'll be talking to the state and city to tell them that we're interested. Hopefully we'll get somewhere by early fall.

Hank: The truth of the matter is that right now we don't have any real hard deals.

New Speaker: I wish to say something about Senator Backman's proposal.

Gerry: I wish he had talked to us before. Where we don't talk to each other is in Massachusetts Backmam is hearing testimony right now to authorize the Massport Authority to look at South Boston. Flagstone did a study of the South Boston site and recommended ship building. It's second best use in terms of impact on the city was a mixture of lending factory warehousing or whatever you can scrape together. They did look at a few trad subsidies, study which required has already been made, it doesn't look very favorable. 12 of the 13 free trades were loosing money, with substantial public subsidies behind them. The city again because of it's fiscal situation can't end up subsidizing a free trade building. I'm assuming you know what free trades are, basically the import and export thing without getting American duties if you have a manfacturer, if we are talking to a European pharmaceutical company which is desperate to get into this market. If we could get two of them lined up we would be very close to the free trade zone. If you declare a free trade zone and build a fence people will not be beating down you door to get in there. There are 13 in this country and they're not full yet, so just building it will not automatically attract the market. If we can get a couple of companies, then we can go for free trade zone, which really is the prime tenant to establish one, and a prime tenant for whome the free trade zone is a incentive. If we can develop one of those through this medical-dental center, and we have had interest in it, but it will be run by Massport, becuase they're the only agency in the Commonwealth that has been authorized to apply.

New Speaker: The park line is not a cut, the primary use of it would be for ship building, but did you say you don't have a ship builder interested in either of the two sites?

Gerry: We have two ship builders.

New Speaker: They can build a commerical vehicle in there, a tanker, etc.

Gerry: You can not build super tanks, that is the 250,000 tons dead weight, but you can build a lotof other things.

New Speaker: Again, that would be your preference for the use of the two sites, ship buildi

Gerry: Given that everything that's given now remain. The number one principle in base conversion is it's much easier to convert stronger economy than it is in a weak one,

New Speaker: Can I ask one quick question, getting into the other use. In Charlestown, Eli say if Marcia's foundation comes up with the money, where's the entrance going to be to Charlestown, can you do this without disrupting the community?

Eli Post: We're looking at alternatives for providing particular access into that portion o the Charlestown area that would be used for industrial purposes. I think we can achieve it with respecting the area as a historical portion and that the resident community remains to the side.

URBAN SYSTEMS

Lou Alfeld: I have two things to talk about, one is I want to make a few comments about the paper I wrote today, and the other thing is the work that I'm doing now with the BRA people

As far as the navy yard goes, in view of the past analysis that I've done in terms of balancing jobs and people in the city. In one of the BRA handouts there is an area in Charlestown noted for possible residential use. In the paper I said it might be possible to put in some high income residential use as opposed to lower or moderate, or federal inco The work that's going on in the housing study, it may not be a good idea even to put in hig income housing out there of the high density type. If you're looking ahead to expanding t family population, as opposed to either high income elderly people in high rise towers or high income young singles, or young married in high towers, you've got to be able to create the housing for the families, if you can live in the city. It's not clear yet whether that conversation in Charlestown, demolishing the buildings and putting up single family homes o half acres sites, we really - essentially compete for suburbs so that's still an open questi

Several weeks ago, we talked about housing in Boston, and I've done a simple study of housing trends since- that time I've been working very closely with Kent Colton and Rolf Goertze on developing a housing model. Essentially what it is it divides all the housing stock in Boston into a high, middle and low income category, and further subdivides those categories of housing into what we call masionary housing, which is the stuff built before the turn of the century - Back Bay, Beacon Hill, South End -housing that is basically structurally sound and is amenable to rehabilitation. Next is what we call wood structure housing - which is mostly the three deckers in Boston, most of the old wooden things are more difficult and expensive to rehabilitation and generally age more quickly once they get down to the bottom of the market. It's hard to bring them back up. And what we call the high density housing which are the newer post war construction, either garden apartments or high rise towers whatever the name may be, but it's mostly the newer stuff that is on much higher density sties that the wooden stuff. What we've been looking at is how that market how the housing was distributed in 1960, what were all of the constructions, demolitions an conversion, and what the housing market is in 1970.

We;ve got data for those three things. The 60's stock, the 70's stock and what happen between 60 and 70. We try to tune the model to reflect the changes between 60 and 70. We to do two things. One is to make a simple projection based on what happened between 60 and if those market forces continue what does it look,like,in 80, and secondaly to begin to pla with particular policy changes to see what we now expect from specific housing policies fro the city to change the housing stock. Now actually this is more than a housing model in th sense that it does have income groups in it, and out of the model we do make projection abo population who's going to be living in the housing, how many people of different income catergories and different kinds of housing, what you might call population densities, the number of people per unit in the wood frame structures as opposed to high rise apartment an that population density varied for income groups. We are also putting in numbers for labor force participation, for each residential unit that filled up with a family, how many peop in that family are actually participating in the labor force. And so far at least the numb are fitting together and I hope that in 2 to 4 weeks to have a report out that we'll be abl to discuss at one of the meetings.

This is closly tied to a second effort that I've been working with Alex Ganz and membe of his staff on goals for Boston in trying to make an assessment of the balance between jobs, housing and people as far as projections goes in looking for consistencies and consistencies and possible goal projections. Both I and the BRA staff are just getting started on that, there's really nothing to report right now, it's been an area of mutual learning. I expect that the things I'm doing right now which are not related so much to deep analysis for the navy yard or Columbia Point, a lot of these things are being handled by very specific staff and I've been devoting my efforts to long term broader planning. That is where the effort is going now, and I hope that will be showing some fruits of the effort within four weeks, and probably longer for the goals.

GOALS

Hank:We've still got ten minutes, maybe you'd like to question Lou on some of the work he's doing. When you talk about goals, what kind of goals do you feel are lacking, what sort of goals are you working on?

Lou: I'm not so sure that goals are lacking. One of the problems in goals setting is everybody talking with the same sematics. What is a goal? And what are you really trying to accomplish? We are in the process of defining what is the population goal for 1980, how many people does they city want to have in 1980? Is that a number that we can specify or isn't it? And once you have population then you can talk about distribution of population as far as income groups and housing. The process is one of making sure that all of the goals that you're striving for are all consistent with one another, that you're not creating 30% more housing in the expectation of only a 10% rise in population, or vice versa. That is a difficult process to get all of the pieces together. We're still trying to come up with the numbers to find out even if there are discrepencies in some areas.

Hank: Any questions for Lou?

New Speaker: Do your goals concern themselves with economic factors, the way the city should look in terms of investment, income, etc?

Lou: What we're looking for in terms of goals, would be population as distributed by income groups. Housing stock distributed by equality, income groups and jobs as distributed bu skill categories, looking particularly at the rate of upward economic mobility for people at the bottom of the ladder moving up, jobs available for people to move up through the socio-economic ladder. I guess that's at the first cut. When we'll go back from there to see how specific goals relate to policies now in the process of being formulated. Policies for education, for job creation, for investment all of these things are subsidiary to a main goal of how to do you want the city to look.

New Speaker: In terms of a population distribution by income, is that the goal?

Lou: It's one way of stating a goal, you could make a statement now that say by definition we could say the city's divided 1/3,1/3,1/3. A third of the people are at the bottom, and a third are in the upper part. How do you want that present distribution--I'd expect it to change in the next ten years, how would you like for it to change? And if you'd like part of that distribution to wind up with more people at the top and more people in the middle and fewer in the bottom, which gives a goal, try and set how much and then what strategies are compatible with moving people in one direction or the other.

New Speaker: The city's made up of people, isn't there a goal that's more basic than that. What do the people look towards, health, happiness and wealth. Isn't there something as basic as that when you work with their resources to attain that before you get to the people themselves?

Lou: Well health and happiness for who, for how many people? The overall goal might be to improve the quality of urban life. At that point it is very general. What improves the quality of urban life? How do you translate it into something we can measure? You don't just legislate the quality of urban life, one of the things you do is to reduce poverty. (People believe the reduction in poverty will also reduce crime.) We'll be discussion the different problems, but I think the BRA has chosen a good place to start: how many people do you have? How many houses do you have?

New Speaker: The people you consider are residents of Boston, do you consider people in Boston for other periods of time, like working during the day, so that you get a universe of people and say what's best for them, or are you only dealing with Boston residents?

Lou: Right now we're just dealing with Boston residents.

New Speaker: What Gerry said is pretty clear - he's got a piece of land with some structures on it and he want to put it to use as soon as possible.

Lou: Well I don't think that's really true, I think what he's looking for is put it to a use that benefits Boston.

New Speaker: I said first of all to put it to use.

Lou: Well now it doesn't benefit the city, you could make it a garbage dump or a target ran for the navy. There are lots of uses that he might be able to get that's he's not interest in getting at all, he'd rather see it remain idle.

Gerry: We got a proposal for a scrap yard.

New Speaker: I think the issue between the population goal and a population limit as a mean to a goal is important, and I think a population goal by itself doesn't mean anything and maybe that's part of the problem. I think that Lou would probably agree with me on that statement. The problem in looking at cities historically is that cities havn't set a population constraint for themselves. In trying to address the problems of the many different groups that exist, particularly the low income groups in the city, usually what happens is that you design housing, low income housing and low income job training programs or a whole range of programs to attempt the low income population, which in the final analy draw in more low income people for the city than the programs can sustain, so that you have more low income people competing for the same limited number of low income jobs. More low income people, really an expanding supply of low income housing.

If you acknowledge there is a initimate relationship between the population balance and the total population within the community and that quality of life, you stand a much better chance for a real benefit for your city resident. If instead every policy tends onl increase city population so the number of jobs go up or the housing quality goes up but the average doesn't benefit because there are that many more people ther competing for it, then maybe you're just repeating the mistakes of the past and that's something urban dynamics is trying to avoid.

New Speaker: I just want to know what are you trying to attain?

New Speaker: I would like to submit that that's a pretty limited goal because if you don't consider all of us in the city then we come out as objectives of whatever policy...

Hank: Transportation is the kind of issue that is a non resident...

New Speaker: There is a tremendous commitment by the BRA not only to work in Boston but to extensions outside the city. I don't see goal setting in itself. I think the important first step is only that, that what it does is really provide a more rational basis for decision making and that's a goal in itself.

Lou: To add to that, the overall population goal is not independent of all those other issues, such as the distribution of that population as far as income groups, distribution of housing, all of those together,form one consistent package that makes a goal. Once you know what it is you'd like to have the city do, then you can evaluate these other policies that you're talking about in terms of transportation or anything else that impacts the metropolitan area and decide whether the particular policy in the city moves the city towards its goal or away from it, and that gives you a basis for evaluating city policy, wh is really what we're talking about here. Does the city by taking certain action bring itse closer to a goal which helps its residents or is it moving further away?

Hank: Well it sounds like you've got a good start on one aspect on base closing, and an inventory on what's happened over the last nine years.

New Speaker: Who's given direction to this study?

Lou: Everyone is contributing something to an ongoing conversation, there is a paper that w authored by one of the BRA people on some preliminary goals.

Hank: Ultimately what Lou is doing is to look at housing if the direction we're heading... is that consistant with some of the things we're going to do. A goal might be a consistenc of balance and not necessarily a goal of increased of 50,000 people in a certain income category in the next 10 years but a goal of a population that might balance the other attributed that we seem to be finding for the city. We don't have the right to say how man people should live in the city.

New Speaker: The suburbs do, why not the city?

Hank: I don't know that they do that now.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program Feb. 21, 1974

Columbia Point

Hank Emerson: Today we're going to concentrate on Columbia Point. We're going to let Lou Alfeld talk first this time. He's never had the opportunity of leading a discussion off. It's always been poor Lou commenting and reacting. Let him lead the dice here before we start.

We are going to be talking about Columbia Point today and I've done a little thinking about it over the last couple of weeks. As a matter of introduction I think one of the things that impresses me is the various things we're got there. We've got a development opportunity for private development under certain circumstances. We have a large university: some business there: and in terms of public housing you might be interested in knowing we have about 5% of the city's public housing stock ther Of 1,500 units that are there, 1,000 are occupied.

One of the big problems with the Columbia Point peninsula has been that it is so isolated - culturally, socially and economically. In our thinking about it there's a danger that we continue to think about it in a little separate package as opposed to thinking about Columbia Point in terms of the total city's urban strategy; whether it be economic development, education or housing. We'd like to focus on Columbia Point today and magnify it and examine it and think about it. But we do need to do it within the context of the city.

Lou Alfeld: First of all I just want to report on the completion of our first intensive two day seminar in urban dynamics, held last Thursday and Friday at M.I.T. There will be another one of these scheduled for late March or early April, and those of you who would be interested in learning more about urban dynamics can talk about to the past participants to find out what they thought about it. I've been getting some feed back from them on how to strengthen the program and make sure that the next time around it will be better.

Newell Flather: May I interrupt to say that maybe it needs strengthening, but for anyone who's going to be a regular participant in this series, I think it's a terribly good experience just in terms of being able to think and talk in shorthand with Lou and with other people who already been through it. It puts us all on the same communication band.

Lou Alfeld: I had mentioned two weeks ago that work was progressing on a housing model with the BRA. As with most models, I made overly optimistic projections of when we were going to get something completed. I'd hoped to be able to bring in more information than I actually have, so I'll put off talking about that until two weeks from now when I hope to have something written.

My comments on the Columbia Point program are really very simple; and are questions more than anything. In reading through the plans and the programs so far for Columbia Point, I found at least an absence or down playing of the major theme that I've been stressing at every one of these luncheons, and that was balance between jobs and people. I suppose if you people here that phrase enough times it will drive you all up the wall. Particular focus of course is looking at any projected population changes in the city, whether that be relocation housing or new housing or people leaving the city, and how that balances the jobs available in the city and jobs available period. One of the goals of the urban dynamics analysis is really to try to develop policies that seek to rebalance the city in terms of jobs and population, in terms of reducing unemployment, poverty, and providing for a healthier socio-economic mix of the Boston population. I noticed in reading through this brochure (on the Columbia Point Revitalization Program) that there really hasn't been much stress on the jobs that might be offered at Columbia Point. I think there are a great many jobs that are already slated for the Columbia Point area, not only in the university itself, but in the

commercial centers. I would say as a first step it might be useful to identify how many jobs are going to be created or are already at Columbia Point, and the type of people these jobs might serve, whether they be Columbia Point residents, present or future: whether they be residents of the nearby Dorchester; or,in terms of commuting patterns whether these jobs are actually being created for people who live outside the city who will be communting in.

The second point that I want to raise is we might reexamine our ongoing planning process to see where it is possible to squeeze in an extra job or two or more if possible. It may be possible that plans could be developed to get opportunity for increased numbers of jobs, particularly for residents that live in the nearby areas. It certainly represents a land resource and an opportunity in the city to begin planning to achieve a better balance and I would just like some of the speakers to address the point of jobs and people in the area.

Hank: I think in a way you're saying something that I said also, looking at Columbia Point as an isolated problem is not as realistic as looking at it in connection with the city. Does anyone have any questions of Lou?

Lou: Let me just say that the perspective I'm putting the Columbia Point program in is one of the larger city as a whole. Many people have believed, and perhaps rightly so that Columbia Point has been a drain on city resources over the last ten or twenty years. And it's possible to revitalize that Point and make it a very positive input for the city You could turn it around from being a debit to an asset. I'm really adressing it from that larger perspective.

Hank: We'll go to the presentation that Andy Olins and Eli Post are going to make. As most of you know Andy has been chairing the Mayor's taskforce on Columbia Point and he's right in the middle of it so we look forward to his comments.

Andy Olins: Thank you. Thanks for the opportunity also to take this Columbia Point idea to a yet large group than we had before. The problems with Columbia Point are enormous. One of the major difficulties that we have at the outset, is to begin to suggest that Columbia Point might be something other than you think it is right now. I suppose the first thing I should ask you is what does Columbia Point mean if someone said it to you? As Joe Baressi was talking to Fred Glimp before it was still the image of that old dump that used to be out there. That is what it was, and the housing project is something lik the dump.

Our first problem is to suggest that something else could and should and might happen. I suppose that the university's presence is the catalystthat finally enabled the Columbia Point problem or potential to be a causein a much larger setting than just the constituency of public housing saying that things are pretty bad out here. With the university there the impact immediatly drew in the adjacent communities which in the past turned their back on Columbia Point. The university was a negative cataylist. Everybody began to think about what's going to happen in Columbia Point. Once you began to think about what would happen in Columbia Point, you could get a lot of diverse people into the room to talk about the problem. That hadn't happened before. We began t recognize the scope of the problem, we hadn't begun to recognize it, we really didn't hav any idea in terms of a plan of what we might want to have happen out there. That's what this task force got developed -- folks who were sympathic and interested in the problems in Columbia Point and had the potentials to work together going over and above and arounc their own individual points of view, toward an agreement ultimatly expressed in that document on the things that should happen in Columbia Point. It took into account a great number of diverse views.

One of the things that the community was telling us of at the very outset was that Columbia Point would not be an industrial park in the city as far as they were concerned. They did not want to consider that option. That flew smack in the face of what John Hancock wanted to do based on shopping mall, and what they thought was in their best interest of get the zoning changed to get some jobs out there. It put us in the city in direct conflict wiht Gerry Bush's outfit which felt quite honestly that was a pretty gooc location for some new jobs. But it was recognizing what was desirable and what different folks wanted to have happen that led to a lot of long involved a complex community-city-university-state discussions and the creation of a planning process that is really only a dream. There's nothing specific in there, nothing hard, in terms of what's going to happen here shown on the model. To go back to my first point it's an attempt to demonst

that something else could happen out there. The first break through that we saw was the ability of the folks in the project and in the abutting residentialcommunities to listen to a plan for change out there and then be willing to support it.

It's our feeling, I think, that there's going to be no major kind of development in the future; that is not implicitly and explicitly tied to the communities that are directly and indirectly affected by it. We had a group of people that normally wouldn't be in the same room together and that I think is the most important part; you can knitpic the proposal. It is wide open to challenge about almost any question that you want, but point is that underneath it is the desire to have something. That's necessary and withou that you wouldn't have anything at all. We went through a television program on Channel the other night, the first question was: where's all the money coming from? I don't know where the money's going to come from, I haven't the slightest idea yet. It's clearly in need of some public funding. We'll work it out, but we haven't got it yet. I go into a meeting with Columbia Point residents and they want to know what are the rent structures going to be, how many 3,4,5,6 bedroom apartments are going to be there? I haven't the slightest idea about that either. You can't talk about that. Lou talks about jobs. There aren't any jobs talked about here and there are no apologies about tha either, not yet. First we have to get the idea that change is possible, that the forces for change are really there.

We wanted to present an outline of a planned channel of private forces in a constructive way recognizing the fears of the surrounding neighborhoods that they maybe were ripe for speculation. So here's the frame work which is: intelligent, governmental and private action can be a vehicle for important, vital controlled change in the neighbo hood.

Joe Baressi: In the beginning of your remarks you said that the community rejected, the option of industrial development. How do you define community - does that mean the Columbia Point people or the surrounding neighborhoods or all of them? Why did they reject it?

Andy Olins: Well, that's their community. The people who are involved in the task force are listed on the inside cover of that document. After we got everybody in a room; there was a certain major process of choosing who's going to be there and how many people you should have in the working committee and all that sort of things and after they worked ou their initial antagonisms to Wood and his people for a while, then you began to look arou for things that you could agree on at the start to develop a certain amound of confidence The presentation of the community people of Dorchester, South Boston and Columbia Point was they were not at all interested in the Columbia Point shopping mall becoming an industrial park for light industrial uses of anything like that. What they wanted to see was a return to some form of commercial operation; they were telling us, uniformly that commercial facilities on the peninsula were vital.

Hank: My only observation would be Joe, on that, that in terms of the total land area of the public peninsula, the shopping center must be less than 5% or 10% of the total lan area, it's kind of the gateway of the peninsula and if you set the tone for the whole peninsula by having light industry there at the gateway, you'd be setting the tone for th whole land mass in terms of development. Now, it it is desirable to have any good reisdential area,(I'm not saying yes or no) probably you'd be cutting off that alternativ if you started out by having light industry at the gateway. As I understand it we're sor of in a holding pattern here right now getting people to hold off on thinking of light industry until we can figure out what's the best use for the 317 acres. There's a couple of things there that are really not that big in terms of area, the public housing project is about 20% of the area. And yet it, when we think of Columbia Point, at the moment most of us think about the housing project more than University of Massachusetts, which i one third the area.

Eli Post: We didn't opt for a residential reuse over light industry simply because the community said we don't want light industry out there. It was based also on our judgemen that there was an enormous potential at that site for a major new residential community, and to the extent that we began now to introduce light industrial uese it would preclude that potential from ever being realized. The potential for job producing uses was very limited and in no way concurred with the kind of residential potential that existed. So, along with community dialogue was the professional planning judgement that we want to see residential uses here in the long run.

Andy Olins: Let's get out another aspect on it: political. Politically transcribing the community desire into something real. They were telling us also to get some commercial out here. If we're able to get commercial out there, we shall have done a great deal for our own credibility in buying some time to try to be able to put together this whole program.

Lou: My own comments about jobs were not necessarily directed only toward industrial jobs. I realize the commercial facilities certainly produce jobs and there are many jobs at the university that could be directly fulfilled by any residents.

Andy: If there was an opportunity for Volvo to bring a new manufacturing plant in the U.S. and they landed on Columbia Point, as their location, you know, the dynamic to this thing would be considerably different. There's nothing like that out there. The hot tenant to go in there was a relocated use of an existing city job base. The hell with that too, it doesn't buy us anything. There was just nothing compelling at the outset so that that commercial-industrial decision had to be scrapped in favor of industrial.

Fred Paulsen: In terms of the planning, how much do you know about the job skills or the employability of the people that live in the housing project? Do they fit the kind of jobs roughly speaking, that exists in a university or in a commercial complex?

Andy: The Columbia Point constituency right now is maybe 60% female. They have almost no job match with anybody. That's my impression. But if you're looking for, part time job opportunities as a supermarket cashier, or a stocker of shelves or something like that there's more likely going to be part time opportunities there than there would be in some other really blue collar industrial development. Job planning for the existing Columbia Point residents can't follow any traditional method - its got to be special purpose with built in subsidies and built in training programs. The very fact that families live in Columbia Point is testimony that they can not compete in the market.

Fred: Who would do that? Who would have responsibilty among government agencies, in terms of identifying possible jobs. It seems to me that the study that's been done and the government participants that have been involved have been looking at it from the standpoi of land use planning and housing. The question I would ask is who is sort of making the input on manpower development.

Alex Ganz: We had raised the question 2 or 4 weeks ago on the question of jobs, manpower a education. The city is both aware of the problem of the mismatch of the skill requirements of jobs and the occupational skills of labor force part of the strategy of job creation, manpower training and education reform is addressed to trying to reduce that gap. The city's department of Commerace and Manpower is responsible for the manpower training program, as well as the creation of industrial work centers in areas of the city. And, of course, the city's policy on strengthening the growth of the service oriented economy is geared toward creating more jobs and more opportunities; the problem of the job opportunities for Columbia Point residents is part of this. Naturally we want to create opportunities there, but certainly, the overall strategy is creating the opportunit in the city. The university, itself, does have pretty good community cooperation going, not just in the project, but in Southy and Dorchester too. Jobs that are available through the unviersity are made known. They have an office within the development itself.

Andy: My one point really is you have a process and a plan. The plan is agreed subject to a great deal of change. The process is the important part of it. Without that process they'll be no plan, they'll be no change. This is an attempt to build a constituency through the process for a major change at Columbia Point. I welcome this group to the constituency.

Jim Carroll: How do you see this group taking this from here, or individuals in this group taking the Columbia Point dream as you say, from here from your point?

The Opportunity for Housing

Eli Post: Alex and his staff just completed a draft document for inclusion in our forthcoming downtown plan This is a document on downtown economy and particularly the office market. Alex points out that in downtown Boston half of the office space is less than 15 years old. And that's an incredible asset for a city. It means that more than half the stock is modern. Now you compare that figure with equivalent figures for housing which I think is something like 3/4 of all the housing in Boston is more than 80 years old it's a serious problem. That you've got a lot of vary old housing, a lot of capital investments and so on. And when I look at Columbia Point, I see as an opportunity, a rare

opportunity in Boston to build a major amount of new housing. Boston is unlike Cleveland, Detroit and Newark. It doesn't have large tracks of slum areas, large tracks of abandoned blocks and so on - there is very little opportunity to replace that old housing stock. No city can remain viable unless you continually replace the bottom of the ladder. And we have an opportunity here to pump in a few thousand units of housing and it's very rare that you can do it elsewhere in the city. There are just no other tracks of land.

This city is incredibly hostile to the kind of renewal that took place a couple of years ago. By no stretch of the imagination could the BRA launch a renewal program involved any kind of widespread clearance or redevelopment and relocation even though we are demolishing some of the older or some of the worst buildings in the city. To the extent that a city should replace its housing, this is an opportunity to do so and my feeling is that that's one of the main reasons why the city ought to be pursuing a development program at Columbia Point.

Question: You would view this as replacing housing that would be demolished somewhere else probably in the city to keep the overall city perspective?

Eli Post: Yest, one of the issues that I imagined Lou would bring up is to the extent you build new housing here and people move in from Dorchester; it means at some point along the line you're going to increase abandonment elsewhere in the city. I just saw some maps the other day that are a little shocking, showing bankruptcy foreclosures in the Dorchester area. They are beginning to increase. And to the extent you provide new housing for people living in existing housing you may be speeding up that process. I think that in the long run this is the price you have to pay for updating the physical plant of the city.

Nan Robertson: That speaks to some of the alarms expressed in the Channel 2 program regarding the possible effects of large numbers of students in Dorchester. Both the number of students involved and the total relative to the size of the community is very small. There is some capacity for absorbing new people even in existing housing.

Hank: Did that Channel 2 program raise any other issues that we ought to hash out? Since I didn't see it, I can ask that with great innocence.

The Impact of Students

Nan Robertson: The intent was I guess to cast the impact of the University on Dorchester in the same way that there had been an impact on Brighton-Allston by B.C., B.U. and Harvard. Some spokesman for Allston was making clear the lessons that Allston learned from students in the neighborhood which I don't think are really transferable. And there was also some hard questioning about what are the sources of funds, how are you going to pull this off? Those are appropriate questions.

What we are referring to is some figures we drew together on the relative size of the student populations potentially, in fact in Allston-Brighton and U. Mass in Dorchester and South Boston. If you take the affected neighborhoods as defined by the BRA and simply the student population of Northeastern University, B.U., B.C., and Harvard Business School, not counting the number of smaller schools, plus U. Mass all of which ar in fact have students living there. The student population is 12 times as big in Allston-Brighton and the population is 1/6 the size of Dorchester I really think it's a demonstrable fact that there is no comparison in the situation.

I think the other piece of this that was not brought out in the program and it's probably too bad, is that the student population has at least 2 sides; one is that in Allston-Brighton, it might have tended to result in apartments being created out of large places and it might have resulted in fast food stores replacing the nostalgic shops that the speaker on the program referred to, but it also arrested the kind of economic decline that most older neighborhoods including Dorchester face. I think that even if one forcas that kind of army of people coming in with cash on the line to buy housing - which is simply not the case - you have to say that that can't be a disaster. There was a lot of nostalgia from the speaker, who also got into saying "when I was a boy I used to be able to walk on Commonwealth Avenue and there were nice family stores and now they are Burger Kings and discoteques." Well, there are a lot of neighborhood shopping centers that have closed doors.

Hank: If you work it out mathematically, you're saying that the student impact in the Allston-Brighton area is 72 times as great as it would be in the Columbia Point area.

Nan Robertson: If you take the student population, as I say, at those major universities as a percent of the number of housing units and the impact neighborhoods in Allston-Brighton is 58%. If you take the existing U. Mass student body and the neighborhoods adjacent to Dorchester, it's 8%, well no it's 11% if you take just the immediate neighborhoods and even at full size it's only 25%.

Question: Do you have student dormitories planned for Columbia Point?

Nan: No, we have 60% of our students are living at home with their families. This was planned as a commuter institution.

Question: So, the other 40% will have to find themselves residences other places?

Nan: No, 15% of them are married, I mean they're people, that's right, who will be living elsewhere in Boston, but it's not at all obvious that many of them will want to come to Dorchester as against staying where they are now since it's probably easier to get there by the Red Line to the campus than it is to get there from elsewhere in Dorche One could argue that if the city encourages large-scale development housing right near the school it would open up older existing units, and might encourage more students to move to Columbia Point than might otherwise do so.

Andy Olins: This is a proposal for a economically and socially integrated community th uses the model of including public housing as a part of what goes on around them, rather than continuing the model of public housing as being something isolated from the communi that it resides in. There have been two HUD models to date. The older family public housing development. The first one, done in St. Louis is basically to wipe it out. It's a disaster, it doesn't work. You relocate the people, tear the buildings down and start again from stratch. The second model that HUD is now using is a better management concept within the local housing authorities. I have no quarrel with that, except it continues the idea of public housing as separate and something else. The model here is put that project in something much larger, where the political forces are larger, more diverse, more powerful and forces of the other society are there at the help and make the thing work.

Lou Alfeld: Just as a suggestion that might strengthen your presentation: make an inventory of the kind of jobs expected; the whole range of job skills perhaps, not durin the first phase but over a 10 year period. Show how the housing stock in a sense can match with those jobs and to try to build around that link - either training programs, or positive programs to try to get residents into lcoal jobs phasing over a period of ti nothing happens over night. That way you build toward a community where people live and work and walk in the area to strengthen neighborhood and have people flowing back and forth in there, less commuter traffic perhaps and a stronger sense of neighbrohood in the whole project.

Andy: The rhetoric was clearly on the other side: the university was a force that was going to destroy the community in Boston. The political wisdom was that Dorchester was soft community. Now the university presented a real potential for making some very positive things happen. Opening day it was very well handled from the university and th city too it was not the disastrous traffic jam that had been predicted. That's importan It reinforces the belief that something positive the belief that something positive can happen.

New Speaker: Hank, you have an operations center down there, has this plan in anyway affected your thinking with regard to the future.

Hank: Well we're certainly intensly interested in putting what corporate support that we can behind it, we look at it more as a civic opportunity than an profit opportunity. We think now is the time, the momentum has been built up behind a really good developmen proposal out there, and if this momentum were ever lost, it would be very hard to fight off the people who want to go into light industry. I think this is a critical time, if we don't get this thing jelled and somehow underway in 1974 I would think it would be a great tragedy.

Andy: Well to us that initial jelling is reopening segments of the mall for commercial u The physical development--it's unrealistic to think something is going to happen in '74. A demonstration park might be fundable. Yes, we are not unmindful of the neighbors that we have; not only the First but the Boston Globe and B.C. High. They are part of this

Hank: It's a chicken and egg thing Andy. If your plan starts to jell you'll get that shopping center opened up zip, but until you see some light in that direction any profit oriented guy is not going to do that. It's pretty well established that profit

making guys have to bear the major burden in developing the Point. We don't have any big amounts of public dough available. So some guys, if he's going to invest in that, is going to have to have a return on his investment. It's going to be justified, and h not going to do it because of his civic responsibilities.

Fred Paulsen: Just from the stand point of the public housing population in terms of first steps, I would think to gain confidence in governments, other institutions abilit to do things that, there has to be some improvement on immediate problems, like maintanc and opening up the recreation facilities of jobs. And those initial things are more important to them than the shopping center, or more important than getting preliminary commitments on funding for the major new developments.

Andy Olins: The task force that put this together had a premise from the outset that we could not deal with the day to day problems that exist in Dorchester of Columbia Point of South Boston and get something going. I still want to maintain that kind of dichotomy here. I think we can get people thinking on two different levels, if other agencies or participants on the task force wearing other hats do not the fumble the day to day things badly. As I look at it now the thing that we must do is get the commercial base set. That will carry us for a while, not forever, but you also got a more likely administration of the housing authority that is paying better attention to the problems than it has in the past. You've got some other forces going down there. We did not break down on opening day of the unviersity, that was a vital demonstration t things were manageable. No ones going to be able to answer the leaky roof problem at Columbia Point and still be able to concentrate on getting this thing finished.

Question: I gather that this task force is still intact?

Answer: It's in limbo, we've now got to go to phase two.

New Speaker: One of the problems we face is that HUD has temporarily gone out of business and you can't carry a project of this scone forward wothout a reasonable level of participation from the federal government. An to the extent that HUD is in transiti now is not shoveling out dollars at the same rate in prior years. You can't expect something of this scope with the high degree of risk involved to proceed at the rate we' all like to see.

New Speaker: It seems to me the major capital improvements woul best occur along with the private development in the area. It was stated earlier by Eli that this was seen as an attempt to upgrade housing in the city as a whole. Would a plan such as this for Columbia Point be seen as a model for upgrading other area of the city which are obvisouly obsolte?

New Speaker: I don't think it's a model because Boston isn't blessed with large tracts o vacant land. If you got in a helicopter and flew over the city you simply wouldn't find many sites like Columbia Point, you'd see the Navy yards which are not suitable for residentialuse and you see the Common and the Garden and a couple of other large open spaces that can't go this route. This really is a rare opportunity, I don't think that it's a model for future renewal in Boston.

Alex: Just to add to that, Columbia Point is not a model. The city and the private sector are involved partially through this dialogue series on planning and development in Boston to come up with a strategy to revitalize Boston's neighborhoods and to complem the growth of the economy. There are a variety of factors of strength going for the cit in many areas of these cities, and Columbia Point is part of it. Southwest Corridor is another part. The Navy yard is a third part. The inflow of 25 to 34 year olds is a sma part; the suburban jobs and income are factors. In effect what we're trying to do is we together these potentials to come up with the program for revitalizing, improving, conserving Boston's neighborhoods is part of that potential and in that sense is importa beyond what happening in Columbia Point itself.

Hank: Who's got the ball for the next step?

Andy: The staff of the task force.

Hank: That's true, but I think volunters are welcome, if anyone's got the dough they'd be happy to have them step up. Two weeks from today we'll be going on and talking about the Southwest Corridor. I think in our housing subcommittee will report as well.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
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Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program March 7, 1974

Southwest Corridor

nk Emerson: I think we've pulled together a real good group today, This is going to be complex presentation with several people involved, but I also think it's going to be an cellent presentation. The strategy involved in pulling together the group of people to lk about the Southwest Corridor was engineered by Alex Ganz. Rather than attempting to troduce people and explain why they were chosen, I'll let Alex introduce each person and plain why they're here since he did determine the strategy. Alex Ganx, BRA.

ex Ganz: Thank you. Today's session will deal with planning for Boston's Southwest rridor. This is an important challenge to both the public and private sector. It volves a large area with great potential, analgous to but different from other areas that 've dealt in recent weeks, such as the reuse of the Boston Navy Yard and Columbia Point. e case of the Southwest Corridor is unique in some ways for it involves a joint effort city and state government, community participation at a prime level in the planning rk itself, and hopefully an expanding private sector role. Tony Pangaro, who is rector of the Southwest Corridor project appointed by the governor, will be the pricnipal eaker and will tell about the planning effort underway. We also have here today some the other actors who will also briefly describe their roles. We have members of the tizens group, Chuck Turner and Lan Durrent, who are very actively involved in the planning fort. We have people from the BRA who are involved in providing planning assistance, as ll as economic analysis of the planning alternatives and planning fesibility. We have ed Salvucci, the Mayor's transportation advisor, who's also involved very much in the rategy for the Southwest Corridor project. We also have Ralph Partain, Housing Innovations c. which is providing some consultant assistance in the planning effort. I'd like to esent Tony Pangara.

ny Pangara: Thank you Alex. I will be brief because I think that the paper that was nded out is a good introduction to where we have been. I'll try to tell you in my own rms where we've been, and them try to give an idea, or at least a clue, where we think 're going. I think a bit of history is in order, although I'll try not to get into too ch detail. I think the reason we are where we are is fairly obvious to anyone who's en in Boston and lived through the transportation crisis. The Southwest Corridor is ot of things to alot of different people, and I'll try to give you a definition of what think it is to me, although I'm sure other definitions are just as valid.

Basically the Southwest Corridor grows out of the governors decision in 1972 not to ild new radial expressway lanage inside 128. The Southwest expressway was one of the rthest advanced of those radial expressways, in that a major portion of the clearance s already done. Some two hundred acres plus or minus was taken clear, and a large number houses and businesses were destroyed. The decision not to build a highway, came, I ink, after what was probably one of the most through studies of the implications of ghway use, and the search of alternatives in that period of time. The governor made the cision knowing that he would have to face the music of what to do with that land now at there was no highway to run it. And indeed that was one of the strongest arguments pro highway people in trying to convince others that the highway ought to be built. think the governor made that decision with full knowledge of the implications of it, and deed the people in the community themselves who were fighting against the highway felt at was one of the key reasons not to built it. In a sense, it provided an opportunity thout additional clearance, as most urban renewal has brought to a community seeking onomic growth.

I think that's the key note I would like to make today. We're not just interested in ilding things for their own sake, but we're interested in building things for the future

onomic development of the neighborhoods that they should serve. As a kind of working finition, then, the Southwest Corridor is the cleared land, formally available for that ghway and it's the transportation extensions. I'll use that term loosely to include any ansportation element which is connected to the southwest, streets as well as transit tensions.

To be more specific, I'm talking about the relocation of the existing Washington Street evated to an alinement paralleland depressed together with the Penn. Central tracks, ich now runs roughly along Columbus Avenue. The extension of that rail facility will tend through West Roxbury and to Needham, probably in the Orange Line configuration. so there's a commitment by the state (to provide a replacement service to the communities at are now served by the Washington Street elevated) when that facility is phased out. that the date you keep hearing about when the elevated is coming down, is not just a nction of the fact that new trains will be running some distance from where they do now, at is along the Penn Central alinement, but there will also be provided new service to e communities that formally had it. That specifically is the South End and the Dudley ation area. So there's a committment by the state to first explore and do appropriate vironmental analysis, and then provide a facilty which will get you not only to Dudley t to Grove Hall and eventually to Mattapan. In terms of investment, we're talking about proximatly $500,000,000 in traisit investment, the bulk of which would come from the terstate fund, which was in effect broken this year by thepresident'ssigning of the 73 federal highway act. So there's a commitment on the part of the state to invest that ney in a community which has suffered, I think, untold hardship. In my view, that's obably one of the most significant things that we could say. This probably marks the ginning of an era in which we could say that investment is consciously being directed areas which can use it. I'm making a statement that says in effect that Roxbury is an ea that is economically depressed and can benefit from a publis policy which says we're ing to make public investments in this place and we expect private investments of a mplementary sort, in a controlled sort, to follow suit. I think that's essentially at you people in these meetings are interested in.planning as an activity has no meaning, less it is followed by policy decisions which require public investment and then private vestment to be located in areas where the greatest need can be evidenced. Just by way of ntinuing, the 1960's were marked by periods of blockbusting and monoliythic renewal ograms. We know that today, particularly in the Nixon administration, those programs don't ist any more. What we're into in the 70's is clearly an exploration of public and mmunity interaction in determining future, a type of development unlike urban renewal. d I think today we'd like to talk more about Roxbury than the other communities along e corridor because I think that the problems are most important and the opportunities e the best. The other communities just so you know what they are; Jamaica Plain, slindale, Hyde Park, and to a very limited extent Readville, which is actually part of de Park, all within the city of Boston. What we've been trying to do is over the part x months put together a plan, not one just based on a lot of things just fixed in time, t a plan that recognizes the actual implications and possibilities of doing things. The rk that we've done to date has begun to locate the transit improvements in that corridor a way that we think best encourages the development of the land which will remain by rtue of the highway having gobbles more land that we'll need. And just to give you an ea of magnitude, we're talking probably on the order of 60-80 acres in Roxbury alone. 0-80 acres of land will be remaining, once every transportation improvement that we're ought of will be made.

Some of the things that Lou Alfeld outlined in his paper, posed questions in terms f potential conflicts. My own view of life is not of conflict management but rather of ying to understand what the potentials are. I think Lou put them in terms of suburban vs. rban. That's probably not the case here, in the sense that these transit lines bring to he city certain opportunities and bring to that community certain opportunities. We know hat in transit development there's a substantial amount of activity that's spins off the imple location of a subway stop at a given point. That's not only commercial activity, ut activity which operates by virtue of the land market itself. We also know that there re dislocations possible. For example, if you take the Washington Street elevated down,

ou place a burden on the business which are there by virtue of a location theory that ays you locate certain kinds of things where people get off the train and get on to omething else, and that we now have to try and understand what the dislocation possibilities re in economic terms. At a place like Dudley and what the relocation possibilities, or new location possibilities are at a major transit intersection such as the intersection f Northeastern Unviersity and Ruggels Street where our principal organge line stop will e located. And so it goes. I think I can say similar kinds of things about every location long the corridor. And what we're trying to do is to understand what forces come together t each place, not only from the traditional city planning point of view, which says that ou have a certain number of people passing through a certain place, or that certain land ses are compatable and others not, but also try to understand what the development pportunities are at each of these locations. Ralph Partain has some maps here which will et a little bit more specific about these things. But also what are the economic ossibilities at each of those locations? I think we could say today that we pretty much now within reasonable tolerance at this point. What the land development opportunities are? e probably also know what the potential uses are. Now the questions are what entities o the development? What relationships do they have and call for among the actors and by hat I mean city, state and community, and the private sector. What are the economic goals f all of this? Those are are toughest questions to ask, but I think in a sense the most mportant ones. Another way of putting it is what should be invest in that this point nd how do we control the impacts of those investments? I think that's all I want to say y way of an introduction, and I think now it's reasonable to get specific with Ralph.

li Post: Tony, I think it might be helpful to explain to the group why a Southwest Corridor irector was appointed and made responsible directly to the governor. It's a rather unusual ay of managing highway and transit projects.

ony: I think the primary reason is that the state does own the land. It's as simple as hat. The Department of Public Works took the acerage for purposes of construcing an nterstate highway, which for alog to reasons became unfeasable. Now some of those reasons re clearly rooted in federal law, others are rooted in community desires. My own knowledge f the situation is that the governor personally feels responsible for getting us where we re. He said in 1972 that the state was wrong in proposing certain radial highways and as seen it as a burden that he should take one. He did so with the concurence of the ayor, and together they decided to find somebody to try to make sense out of the things, hich I guess is a quick definition of why I'm here. Would you like to add to that Eli?

li: I think you're being somewhat modest. The Southwest Corridor is an enormously complex roject involving roads, transit and other uses and planning and development. Particularly t the public end, when you try to do more than one thing on a site, Very often doing two hings is three times as tough as two, and three things is ten times as tough as three. It's case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. And the gov. needed someone very killful and knowledgeable who could cope something like this. That's the reason why the osition was created and why created and why Tony was selected.

ony: Well thanks for saying so. I would add quite frankly though that the bucks these days hat come with transportation conduit, and that means that they're channeled through state perating mechinism. It kind of makes sense to try to leverage them as much as we can, y working together with the city and local neighborhoods, or to come to terms with the roblem which clearly runs across tradtional lines. Urban renewal projects as they were one in the early 60's, and they were as good as they were ever were then, just are not appening any more.

ank: Could I ask a question on background? You said that after the transportaion requirements f the Southwest Corridor are met, there would be 60 to 80 acres of land left. So what is he total land area?

ony: Well it depends on how you define it. The corridor itself consisted of land taken by he state for the highway as well as land which is in easements of the Penn Central RR. he initial highway was to strattle and relocate the existing Amtrak lines to New York. So hat if you were to take a total figure you'd come up on the order of 300 acres or so. nce you subtract out of that the railroad which will be relocated but remain in effect, the ddition of transit tracks, the addition of an artirialstreet, one winds up with, in Roxbury

) acres, in Jamaica Plain another 20, in Roslindale something like 15, in Hyde Park, bout 8 and rebuilt something like one. The net figures you're looking for has to be nderstood in the context of what's really there today.

ank: In those, say 100 acres, that would not be transportation oriented, would be the land vailable for all the other projects being considered, including public housing and private nvestment. It's very interesting, just two weeks ago we spoke about Columbia Point hich is also 317 acres. So we have a land mass that's almost the same size.

uestion: Is this a tubular land mass, what does it look like?

ony:Let's take a look at the maps.

omment: The 300 acres is total, the 60-80 is Roxbury alone.

ony: That's right, and the 300 acres includes transportation facilities. One other misleading act, if you will, is that Columbia Point is relatively self contained, and one can draw a ine around it and say that Columbia Point ends here, and something else. The Southwest orridor is a bit like this tubular thing you described in that it snakes through the ive neighborhoods we described. If you consider the transit extensions, they go everywhere. ney go to Needham, Dorchester. So that I think what this map shows in Roxbury is that e're not just considering building something that's long and slinky, but rather we're rying to consider the implications of that cleared land, on the adjacent uses, and looking or ways to couple existing bligthand there is some, existing opportunities, existing everages with the land that we now have, so that you don't get something that looks like linier city. That was a popular but crazy notion in the late 50's and early 60's, but hat you want to get is something that wants to be part of the existing fabric.

uestion: Tony, you spoke of the investment in public transportation out to Grove Hall and attapan. I noticed in the 10 year plan that was published recently that was written up n the newspaper, that they did not mention any improvements in that part of the city. ost of the improvemnts related to extensions out to the suburbs. I was wondering if in fact...

ony: If it's in there? It's in there. It's a terrible thing, Alan Altshuler and I worked n that press release 10 minutes before it went to press, and in the retyping of the draft, t got left out. But there is essentially an amount up to about $225,000,000 to go to attapan. Some of the good press people got the story right.

The 1973 highway act essentially allows us to convert approximately $63,000 worth of ighway construction, that's the inner belt, I95 south and north to transit. The governor arried down to Washington and discussed with Secretary Bringer only a month ago, a draft nterstate transfer proposal, which is effectively what the law requires you to do. The overnor, together with local officials, has to request the withdrawal of those highway egments, and then later the substitution of transit projects for those. Highway money is learly there.

uestion: Does the state own both the tight of way of railroad or just the adjoining land?

ony: It depends on what you call the state. The MBTA now owns the Penn Central right of ay. The Department of Public Works owns the land aquired from the highway, and the two hings are kind of tongue in jaw most of the way.

omment: So that entire right of way to New York is no longer privately owned?

ony: That's correct, at least within the state of Massachusetts.

lex: I think it would be appropirate now to hear from the citizens group that has been ctively involved in the planning effort, on how they see the project and then to have after hat a little more of the planning activity under way.

huck Turner: What really occured to me is, Tony used the phrase which I think is important nd that is the concern for state to use public investment for the development of the pportunity for neighborhoods to grow, neighborhoods that have had various kinds of roblems to use those public combined with the private ones that will follow behind, and se that combination of resources to develop in a way that is positive for their own xistance and growth. One of the things that occured to me as he said that was that as ou talk about neighborhoods, what you're really talking about is people. The other thing hat occured to me is that all of you who are sitting around the table are people who have eached a certain stature in life. I think it's true of everybody in this room and people n all situations, that it doesn't matter what the resources the person brings to the ituation if there is not an opportunity for growth and development and the assistance in that.

s we talk about the Southwest corridor we perhaps see it in a different kind of light than eople in the region see it. We're concerned about the harder aspects in terms of ransportation, etc. But the real question for us is not the nature of the bricks and orter but how the bricks and morter relate to the development of people, the extent to hich this project can be an opportunity to provide assistance for the growth and development f the residents in that area and throughout the other areas, the part of Jamaica Plain, yde Park, Roslindale, and everywhere else the corridor goes. When you have that respective, which I think we all should share about the city as a whole, the people of he city, then I think yourcalculations in terms of how you move perhaps or though a ittle differently because every project whether it's industrial development(near the south-ast expressway or possible housing in the near Jackson Square)for some type of commercial evelopment(near Northeastern in the area near the Fenway), every project being looked at y the community, not only in terms of is there a building there or will there be some tructures there but what kind of real opportunities for the growth of the people who are n the area. It's our determination that it doesn't matter if you spend $500,000,000 or billion dollars, that if we aren't very careful to make sure that the spending of that oney is in a real way relating to the growth of the people in the surrounding neighborhoods hen the money is being wasted, no matter how beautiful the plans, how shiney the railroad ars of how tall the buildings. We feel that all those mechnical, concrete factors have elevance only to the extent that they contribute to the growth of the people, because it s the people who build and the people who destroy. We're all concerned with finding out ays to use our resources to enable people to feel that there are reasons to build and use he creative potential that we all have and that you all have been able to use, rather han the destructive potential we all have.

lex:Perhaps we can get into a discussion now on some of the alternative land use ideas. 'd like to ask Ralph Partain to comment on the work he and Homer and Barbara are doing.

alph: The first thing to say is that we're private consultants, working for the southwest oridinator and our task is to take a first cut at land use along the corridor. [There is hen a discussion using the maps.]

We've managed to identify so far is rom the entrance to the Southwest expressway to Harrision Avenue, we've labeled as six ew possibilities for light manfacturing development. This would take place with in the leared land and also at this point with the CDC and the colaition and other local groups. he EDIC, the Southwest coordinator are looking at industrial possibilitiesin this total rea. Two things have been determined from meetings of those involved. One is the easibility of industiral development in the area and the other is what location of a new rterial street and MBTA facility whould be most advantageous for this development.

Moving up to Dudley Station there are two opportunities to extend the commerical hat exists today. Moving past the extensive housing developments in the South End and oxbury, there are three sites for additional housing in that area. These have been eviewed in several open community meetings to get feedback. We would have to mix large sed parcels and the feeling is that these two parcles would be attractive for housing, nstitutional and commercial development. This area is long and narrow, and it may be problem for development.

Coming to Jackson Square, which is probably the largest site on the whole map,(7-9 acres) ould be good for combined residential and commercial use.

This is where we're at in the development stage. A report is being prepared for istribution to the community for their comments. The next step will be to analysis in more etail each of the parcels. There are four things to look for in analyzing the parcels. he first is the land dimensions, the size. The next would be the topo.(This whole area s basically flat) Next in terms of financialfeasibility what can you build on the land. d the fourth thing is to get some idea of the market this land could hit.

ex:Unless anyone wants to add anything I think we'll conclude the public sector.

ed Salvucci: I'd like to bring the discussion back to some points Chuck made. There's an pression, don't spit into the wind. I'd like to submit that a lot of the transportation oposals of the 50's and 60's were doing just that. Not to be cyncial, I am very happy with

the kind of wind that's blowing, but whether you do or not, the fact is that is a relocation requirement, the fact that there is a much stronger protection to the environment and parklands. The old transportation proposals were simply unfeasible as well as undesirable. The transportations systems talked about here, are buildable and sensible. But if we simply do them because they are doable, we're really missed a good opportunity and won't have anything to be proud of in five of six years. We might have nice transportation facilities running through a desert.

There exists a colaition who are more interested in having the kind of transportation system they know will help them have the kind of city and neighborhoods they want to live in. This group is strong enough to stop plans they consider as bad for the people. It has a lot of support from the city and state.

What we really want to make happen here is what is the potential, not only in terms of buildings but in terms of the whole transportation system in this part of the city. We should get together to take advantage of the opportunity that is there. It is more than physical, the facilities can be built,and we should try to build other buildings too. But uman structures must be there as well, so they will be involved in the building process nd know what is going to happen, and this way will feel a part of the community. I know he public sector can't do this alone, and we can't do it in the public sector together ith the neighborhoods. It is a three legged stool - we need the private sector if this hing is going to be something we're going to be proud of in ten years.

I'd now like to see the discussion get back to Chuck's points in terms of what kind f structures do we build to make sure that the real opportunities are met.

uestion: What is it you'd like the private sector to do?

red: I personally want to see more involvement in the planning process so that opportunities ur eyes might not see are caught while they're still in the development stage. Also some f the work that Ralph is doing in terms of where do we push that street, where do we push hose transit lines within the right of way so that the parcels are buildable is good. hat's something that the public sector can do with support of a consultant.

Construction is an area I know a little bit about. A possibility exists for $200,000,000 f public facilities in construction if things go well and another $100,000,000 of private evelopment on top. Who's going to build it? To my knowledge, there's not a "heavy" lack contractor in the city. I say "heavy" in the sense that they can handle something, nything approaching the size of the projects we're talking about here in transportation. here a some housing contractors, but no institutional contractors and no transportation ontractors. That's not going to happen because we want it to happen, but because some eople think about that as problems - those who know about how companies are formed and how inancing comes in. Maybe it's going to happen because there's a black contractor in ew York or Washington who gets imported here to help it happen. I'm not sure what will appen. But I do know it won't happen unless we're thinking about it right now. If things o well, we should be breaking ground on transportation facilities in about two years. The lack community is interested in getting a certain number of those jobs, and steps need to e taken now for that to happen.

That's just one specific area. What about the development that comes in afterwards? ho owns it, how is it managed? There's a community development corporation in Roxbury, ut they can't make it happen alone, they don't have the expertise. There's a good base f community interest in the neighborhoods adjacent to these facilities. There is a strong ublic commitment from both city hall and the state house, they are trying to make things appen right. But a two legged stool isn't going to stand, it takes that third leg. think it's the structural questions that matter, not in a physical sense but a business ense. What do we do about construction companies? What do we do about entities owner nd operated with facilities that go in afterwards? That partly depands on what those acilities are, which is why I think we need some people in ther process now to understand hat background and are aware as those opportunities come up.

ank: We've got three legs to our stool today, the public and private sectors and the rban systems laboratory at M.I.T. I'll cut in to give Lou Alfeld a chance to talk about he third leg.

Lou Alfeld: Thank you. I think this project represents a good example of what the ultimate goal on the ground planning that urban dynamics has focused on. We have here an example of a redevelopment project which involved redevelopment, building new things, creating jobs. ousing and all the rest. It's a great opportunity for a community. Let's step back and say that from the urban dynamics standpoint what we're looking for is how you go about gearing projects like this.(redevelopment to both further citywide goals and local eighborhood goals, which I see as synonymous) This is creating opportunities for the esidents who live in the city, and creating opportunitiesto move people upward, both ocially and economically, and give them a chance to fulfill their objectives in life.

I have two comments about what I think is a very good start down the road that I would e pushing for. One relates to the micro areas, we look at what's on the map. And in terms f housing, there has been mentioned here the possibility of putting additional housing nto the area along with creating badly needed jobs. The issue I raise is that we obviously ant to create as many jobs as possible in this area and create jobs that are going to be aken by local residents. We are not creating jobs to import a labor force from other ares, ut for the people who need them now. It's their land and neighborhood and they should be he first to benefit from any new commercial development or industrial development. Now t the same time, increased housing projects put another thousand or two thousnad into he area, and I have no idea how much housing is planned. What is meant is that you've got o create 2,000 more jobs just to stay where you were, to break even on the project.

It might be wise to look at how many people are in the area, the total number of jobs nd how new jobs may help to balance what is now a bad inbalance. Therefore, this project an be used as a means of relocating people from presently bad housing into new housing hat is created, and making sure the old housing is then removed from the market. This is alled a refill problem - people move into better housing and jobs perhaps, but their homes radually get refilled up with more people moving in who don't have jobs.

So in terms of planning for the present residents of that area, one ought to look ery closely at what are the present residents needs in terms of jobs and housing rather han planning ahead to increase the total number of residents, let's say in the area importing eople from some other part of the city or other part of the metropolitan area or nation. hat has to do just with the micro area. We can come back to housing, we will be talking bout housing two weeks from now. On the larger area of relating this project to the rest f the city, I raised in the little discussion here today the idea of transportation lanning in terms of reaching out beyond an area reaching through the city. I really on't know that much about the transportation plan for this project and when we get to the ransportation section four weeks from now I'll have more comments.

The issue that I would raise now has to do with the increasing assissibility of present esidents to jobs, wherever those jobs maybe. This is a desirable goal to the city for e want to get people from present neighborhoods to jobs whereeever they maybe. An increase ccess within an area furthers that goal. Extending a transportation line further out n a radial pattern that was initially proposed in the 50's also makes it much easier or people on outlining areas to come into the center city and to commute back and forth long that corridor of access.

The issue that comes up then is using the act. Do you actually increase commuting y bringing more people into the city, increasing the traffic load in the city because it's ow easier to commute. Any time communiting corridor is made easier, as the extension of he extension of the orange line as we've been talking about will do, it increases the evelopment pressures at the terminal points along that line and at any point where you et on or off of that line. The extension of orange line and better transportation access o the few suburban neighborhoods which Boston still has, down toward the south, including yde Park and beyond Roslindale, may increase the development pressures to change those eighborhoods from largely suburban astomosphere neighborhoods to more commercial development ith more high rise apartments. This could increase the pressures for housing, and the ressures to divide up existing housing into smaller apartment units because rents are ow higher, and may in the long run lead to a further deterioration and loss of what Boston ow considers to be a very valuable asset in terms of providing an alternative in the city o suburban living for those who desire it.

jokingly suggested to some people that one of the reasons that people move to the uburbs and make the trade off of the long distance is because they're relatively isolated. ne of the reasons suburban living is attrative to people is because they're isolated, not terms of isolation from the city noise and dirt per se,. or anything else, but just in erms of being away from things. I know I enjoy being isolated from my job when on vacation. efore we absolutely destroy the isolation that exists by increasing transportation access it, we should investigate further the ultimate impact that it might have on the psychology living there, how the neighborhoods may change. That's the rough statement on transportation d I do think we ought to address more closely in this plan the relationship between jobs d housing.

nk: We have Dun Gifford ready to explode.

n Gifford: I'll very quietly make a comment. Responding both to Tony and Mr. Salvucci d speaking as the only industrial realtor in the room I think it's a wise decision not to ise any expectations in the community that there will be any new industrial employment portunities created in the corridor. The reason is that the corridor will be in competition th many other locations for industrial location of new buildings. Old buildings that are ere and that are suitable for industry probably will remain. The pattern of redevelopment lds true that they will move out of the area. That's happened with the produce and meat rket and with wool and printing industry. Given relocation payments and an opportunity they will move to new plants, which are more economical to erate. The corridor is in competion with Rt. 128, with Rt. 496, with New Jersey, Alabama, lifornia and Arizona.

One of the principal things that industries look for when relocating is transportation posure and access. By that I mean super highways and interstate roads. You will find that er the last 15 years, 85% of all relocations have been on major highway frontage, or rectly off the frontage but immediately available to an interchange. The reason is simple, ucks and concrete move the goods. Subways and trains move people, but not longer move ods. I think it's raising false hoped to talk about any serious industrial job portunities being created in the corridor. That is not an argument for constructing a per highway in the Southwest Corridor. We are aware of the ramifications of not building ich is the not so good effects on the neighborhoods. It makes a better place to live but lot tougher to find jobs for the people who would otherwise be able to work there.

Again it's not an argument for building a road. It's just an understanding of the plications of not building it. I read through the material on the southwest corridor d no where in it does it talk about the implications to industrial jobs in Boston. the other hand, look at the statistics that Alex has been developing. Boston is becoming re and more of a service oriented employer. It's not only Boston, it's greater Boston d New England. As the cots of producing industrial products increases in New England, dustrial producers move away from New England, closer to their raw material and their ergy source. Taking up your invitation for inviting in some of the private sector as a ird leg of the stool, we don't mind being the third. Instead of talking about industrial portunities, amybe we should talk about other things, such as commercial opportunities, rvice jobs, hospitals. I don't know what else, but I know that there isn't going to be ch industrial activity in the corridor.

ny: I think we've been using ther term industrial-what we really mean something which es beyond the plant that most people thing of. It's my view that location is highly cessable. Rt. 3, will become I 93 shortly. You can't get much closer to an expressway d still be downtown and get off the highway at that point, I think that's critical. One the things the Southwest Corridor never did was to provide access to people in jobs in e inner city. In fact, you couldn't get off for most of the length through Boston. The cond thing is the proximity not only for that road but to the city hospital and the owing health industry. Let's get off the notion of that industry used to be and try to gure out what it ought to be. After doing this we have to market the site and to figure t a role for each of us, community, private, public sector in a development. And the her question which is who's the tenant, what is that industry, who owns it and runs it, d what are the leverages back and forth? Do we put all our money into a plant for eneral Electric because they aren't going to go under tomorrow or do we try to have it

both ways, in a matter of speaking by having a community based firm in a plant that has community in the development role as well.

Speaking to Chuck's question which is what are the real opportunities here, not what's wrong. Knowing what's wrong is helpful but you know you'll have to do alot better.

Question: When you talk about new industries, health care is a new industry. Do you try and make prosthetic devises, or do you set up a whole half way house for people who you don't want to have in the hospital at $100 a day?

Dun: Understanding where the raw material for food comes from, and why General Foods doesn't have a big plant to process corn because it obvious. What do we have? Fish - not any more. It's distribution, , it's the break down of large lot shipments which is what industrial parks in New England are becoming filled up with. But if you're talking about people, what we try to do in places where we're doing industrial work in an intensivly residential area is go to the people and ask them what kind of things they want. Chuck, I'd be interested to hear you say what kind of work the folks who live out there want to do. What kind of industrial uses would they be willing to have two blocks away from them? What intensity of truck traffic would they be willing to tolerate?

Chuck: To me it's a strange question. For any people who are struggling, the question is how do you get any job and how do you get any job that's going to earn enough money that puts you off welfare? That means the jobs must bring in more money than welfare payments. The kind of industry they would want would be that which would hire them and pay good wages. It's a double question, given the experience of a couple of plants that have come in and left, what kind of industry might come in that are going to stay. The main concern of the people in the community would be whether there are in fact industries locating where they could be hired, and where the wages they could earn would be worthwhile. The discussion is meaningless unless you have companies and unless you have people who know something about the industries that are out there and who are beginning to say these are some of the opportunitiesthe might be out there.

Dun: In response to Fred what he suggested was good. If it's possible to involve at some early point the people who are in the business of constructing industrial facilities, it's going to be very helpful and probably acheive the result everyone wants alos faster. We have constructed in the last five years 2 1/2 million square feed of industrial space between Watts and Compton, California. About 65% of the workforce is on welfare, and it was not without alot of pain that the thing was brought into being. But it's there now and it's fine. We have about six new indistrial buidlings under construction in the park. So we've been through it and are aware of community involvement early on. It was a mutual thing, and we did it with them all the way. It's been a happy success, but for the first 2 1/2 years it wasn't. So I understand what you're saying, but the main thing is to try and have it understood clearly in the community that they understand what industrial uses mean, and all of the implications, and that they are prepared.

Comment: Let me get another reaction. Obviouslyifyoucame to the people and said how would you like to have an industrial park on Blue Hill Avenue the reaction there is going to be no. They would say look at the land on the edge of the community that doesn't really impact major residential areas. Why don't we look at that vacant land that already is zoned for industrial use, that land by the expressway, and plan how indistries down there can work. That is the feeling of the coalition, that there is land suitable for industrial development. Our problem is how do we use the kind of creative genesis that is around to come up with new conceptions?

Hank: This is typical of our meetings. We start out and learn a lot about the Southwest Corridor, and now we suddenly come up face to face with a lot of questions about what makes itfeasible for private investmemt. Two weeks ago we were invited to consider $150,000,000 investment in Columbia Point, and today there's a certain private investment suggested. I think we're beginning to uncover a theme in all of our meetings that in each of our problems there is a public sector role and a private sector role, and I'd like to get your reaction to this Dun. It seems to me at some point the private sector has an obligation to attempt to deal with the subject of what are the realistic economic criteria for private investment, how can we get some of this information on the table and share it with people who are working from another point of view of that we can bring the guys who have

ough to invest into the same ball park with people who have hopes and aspirations for improving a community, such as you do.

Fred Glimp: Fred Salvucci mentioned the 2 to 3 year time frame in terms of breaking ground. I assume this is for transportation. It is clear enough now from the other major eterminations that will allow some planning and development so you can begin to put imes on it. For example, the land reuse question, the MBTA maybe.

Comment: Let me try to outline it. We're anxious to have a preliminary plan, this set of documents and related backup and a set of opinions and if you will and sign offs by he various actors by about the middle of the year. The reason for doing that is that we an then begin to design inearnest the transportation facilities which have about a year, year and a half worth of start up work to do. My view is if we do our work carefully now e can begin tosegregate parcels quickly, and that can be developed on a time frame which s independent of those transportaion facilities. Thinking specifically of industrial stuff ome of the housing parcels. There's no reason to wait, because it's not dependent upon nything that isn't already there.

uestion: How soon will we know what that land is going to cost?

nswer: We will have that settled with federal and state actors in the next two months.

ank:Lou has one more quick comment, then we'll wind up.

ou: In terms of how we could be constructive in a plan like this, Dun, see the little urple lines drawn around the sites up there, now as I remember about the Compton experience ou had a huge industrial park that you could put a fence around and put development in and eople felt like their investment was going to be protected. If you could close off all hose streets and make one big lot , you might be better off in thinking about planning f you tried to keep to the streets in there.

peaker: I'd like to clarify what I said. The parcel that says EDIC could fly now. It's ight next to an existing expressway and pretty well out of the way. There's not much land n this area, and there would be even less land if there were a highway. Even without a ighway there's not enough land to talk about industry. I wasn't talking about physical uestions in industry, because the public sector is smart enough with the private consultants o figure those kinds of physical things out. I was talking about is very predicable right ow, looking at the fact that there is an early opportunity where it said EDIC, and that here's some housing opportunieis along with about $200,000,000 worth of transportation acilities that are going to be constructed. Those are firm, not planning questions and I hink if we started with not physical structures but institutional structures, whereby there ight be some black constructors by the time that construction is ready to go. Whereby he EDIC parcel, which is next to a highway, which has water, etc. _ is right next o the meat market, there are some physical questions there, but it's the institutional uestions that I think we've got to be looking at right now. When I say structures I didn't ean physical, I meant institutional structures whereby we might have a significant amount f jobs going to black people from the community.

Boston more than any other city has a walk to work charasteristic. People live in a etropolitan area, and we're talking about a major rapid transit investment. People in oxbury will be able to get around in the inner core easily by public transportation. The uestion is are the jobs there and are the skills there for the jobs?It's the industrial tructures, not the physical that we're got to be looking at if we're talking about making his part of the city really sing with the kind of transportation investment that we're alking about.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program April 4, 1974

Transportation

Hank Emerson: Our next meeting will be a dinner meeting on April 17. Bob Kenny is going to speak at that meeting about the downtown plan.

I've been thinking about some letters, H.E.E.E.T., standing for housing, economic development, education, environment and transportation. These five things are important, and if we could understand the interrelationship we'd begin to understand how our urban system works. Today the subject is transportation. Alex Ganz is going to give us a little background on why he selected the participants that he did today from the public sector, and then Lou Alfeld may comment if he wishes.

Alex Ganz: Transportation is a large part of the planning effort, the ten year program is upward of two billion dollars, from an estimated twelve billion dollars of public and private investment. We are fortunate in transportation because we have a well outlined program of policy that you'll hear about today. The financing task seems to ve responded well to the efforts of one of our guests here today, Alan Altschuler. We have the situation of what we see as a well articulated, well planned program, balanced program and one whose funding is all there. Today's speakers will be Alf Howard, head of the transportation planning department for the BRA, who will talk about the city transportation program and the solutions that come from the city's transportation policy and Alan Altschuler, principal architect of the public transit, transportation strategy and program that we're involved in.

Alf Howard: I'd like to briefly talk about Boston's transportation program, and also provide a platform for Fred Salvucci to tell us how to deal with the Mass Port Authority. The urban transportation problem is a regional problem. It has to do with urban areas, not a particular municipality. Municipalities have various sizes. Within the urban area of Boston, we are either cursed or blessed with over 100 municipalities. A term I would like to discuss is 'balanced transportation'. At first glance people who like transit might see balanced transportation as transit. It might mean more highways to those people who like to get around in their cars. I have two more concepts. Transportation balance implies a balance among people served in getting around. By that I mean there is a balance for people of various economic circumstances, various physical handicaps, and various ages. Let it suffice to say there is a balance to be achieved here, or in any transportation planning program. We must think of how transportation plans and policies now and in the future address themselves to that kind of a balance.

A fourth 'E' should be added to the other three. That is one of equity, in the broadest sense of the word. We must also look at the areas that might be served by transportation, for there is a balance needed here. For example, should not Brighton's access to downtown Boston, be as good as and as cheap as Quincy's, Ashmont's or Brookline' Very often policies can be made by wheeling and dealing and coming to some sort of solutions based on opportunities and the like, but in the background we must keep some sort of a fair balance in mind, with geographic areas served by transportation.

The third balance has to do with the available energy supply to this country and the world. We do not wish to embark upon an imbalance such that we provide transportation today, and later we ourselves or our children are bankrupt.

The fourth has to do with a given transportation facility, and the environmental impact. You may devise a system which seems right mechanically to get people around, but if in the building it destroys natural resources, neighborhoods, jobs, or does aways with things that can't be replaced,(historical sites) then there is an imbalance. Another balance is one between transportation and land use. Getting down to basics, transportation is nothing more than getting people or goods from all points 'A' to all points 'B'.

As a fifth point, we have the ideas of transportation desires and needs against funds and resources. This tool is an imbalance. Balance is very delicate and involves many facets of living. In one sense we might be dealing with liveability now and in the future versus certain technological or mechanical excesses, which is not to say that they can't be a good balance.

The problem of the transportation program is it doesn't exist in isolation, the problem is regional, statewide and federal. With Governor Sargent's policy statement of November 1972, which reflects the Mayor's thinking on the same subject, we find that subsequent events made these policies become more real, these being the overt regulations of the clean air act, and the energy crunch. Boston as we know it is transit oriented and the next ten years could see a total expenditure running $2.4 billion. Of this about $1 billion could be called public transportation. This is a hard number to put a finger on, since certain transportation systems outside of Boston are directly supported. In reality the region wide program for the next ten years is about $1.5 billion, perhaps a little bit more. There is about a billion dollars that might be oriented to streets and highways and other misc, and perhaps about $400 M for the works of the MDC and others. How can you say the program is transit oriented if as much money might be going into highways during the same given time period? Much of the highway money is invested in some very distinct projects and if you add them up, there's not much left over. The major projects involved in the highway development include a third harbor crossing, which might consume around $200 M, which is a transit tunnel with trucks also. Also, a whole area of investment in the Southwest Corridor, which was a highway blighted area without the highway. That could involve, in terms of highway funds maybe $100 M. What we want to do with the highway program is to use the street and roadway as an environmental tool. There are problems in the street system where neighborhoods and local businesses are impacted. We would like to see projects to channel traffic to where it can be handled better throughout the city. We have plans in mind, and can give you an example. We have projects related to downtown, which try to create a more livable downtown. We have a parking policy that would simply freeze the parking downtown and supply parking more remote from the core area on transit systems. We are supporting the extension of transit lines.

We are faced with two problems. One has to do with dealing with establishments in a certain state of mind. People who feel that it is their authority and mandate to maintain the existing traffic systems, the existing level of service, and perchange to even improve this level, will automatically oppose situations where you pinch the system. It is a value tradeoff. If you wish to create an auto free zone you must consider its environmental products, where you wish to maintain the same level of traffic service. The other problem is a matter of trying to utilize the existing system as far as roads and streets are concerned. We're saying that the street and roadway system that now basically exists is the one that we see for the future. The staff and management will change as will qualifications, and we will make these improvements in order to improve the service and at the same time not encourage too much use of them. We have concluded already that in terms of the various balances of which we have spoken, automobile travel has to be controlled. I'll pass it back to Alex and hope we can include this in the discussion later on.

Fred Salvucci: The point that I'd like to make is that the kind of transportation policy that we've been developing over the past four or five years in the Boston area, and on which I think is fair to say that city hall and the state house are very close to each other, has very consciously involved consideration of all those issues raised by those initials,H.E.E.E.T. The policies we have come up with have tried to take into account all of those factors, and have greatly increased sensitivity to the effect on housing and the effect on the environment. But the transportation policy that we have been pursuing has been quite consiously concerned with economic development. Economic development is an important consideration, specifically the decision to press for suspension of further major highway construction within Rt. 128, and to press instead for major additional investment for public transit. From a downtown viewpoint, skipping all neighborhood arguments, the city of Boston essentially has about

as many automobiles in it as it can tolerate.

When I was with the BRA I participated in doing some interviews. 85% of the people that we interviewd (in the Washington Street area) had gotten into that area by public transportation. The remaining 15% had as many people walking in, from the Back Bay, Beacon Hill or North End as had driven there. That was a restrictive study of one part of downtown, but what it says to me is there are an awful lot of people whose main concern should be the environment of that downtown area. In fact, there has been an effort by some people to establish a dichotomy between environmental and economic concerns. I would like to suggest for the city of Boston, that the environment is one of our major economic assets. If there weren't alot of people who prefered the environment of the downtown area as opposed to that of other cities, regardless of the awful weather we sometimes have, we never would have the kind of growth that we've been having in the downtown area.

We are now at peak capacity of handling cars in the city. The view is if we are to stimulate any more growth in the area the only way to do that is with a transit oriented policy. The highways, besides what they did to the neighborhoods, didn't make sense to us because once you got the cars downtown you didn't know what to do with them A second generation of need in terms of handling the automoblies was going to occur. There was going to be a severe environmental impact especially in the downtown area in this second generation attempt, and there wasn't going to be any money left over. From our point of view the policy of the city, and the policy of the governor in deciding that we weren't going to build new highways inside of Rt. 128, and instead we were going to concentrate our investment on public transit, was as much rooted in a view of how the downtown functions as it was in a view of protecting its neighborhoods.

In terms of service industries, a matter of considerable discussion with Gerry Bush, of the Economic Development Commission, he agreed that the kind of industry that we can maintain in the city are the service industries located in places like South Boston. Why are those firms going to stay on in South Boston, if in ten minutes they can get out to places like Canton on the Southwest expressway? The things that's holding them here is the access to downtown. If we're going to hold the kind of industry and the kind of blue collar jobs that we've got, if we are to enhance the white collar jobs that we have, we thought this made alot of sense.

From a regional point of view, it seems to us and to the Boston Transportation Planning Review (B.T.P.R.) that a view of the whole metropolitan area was to be put together. By necessity this takes a view of land use as well as transportation implications. The view of Boston is very compatable with the view of the suburbs, people who moved out there because they like the green space and are not anxious to see the suburban charcter change.

A second aspect of the transportation policy which we are pursuing is one regarding the airport. We felt, with agreement from the governor and Alan, in terms of the needs of the city transportation, that Logan Airport is really adequate, in terms of air transportation. The city should press for high speed ground transportation to New York, because our city is very much tied to New York. If we could get decent train service to New York under three hours, a good part of the traffic in and out of Logan would probably be cut down. In terms of the long range growth of the city, the best thing would be expanding our accessability in the rail direction. The priorities of the airport was not to shut it down, as Mass Port has accused the city. We never proposed shutting the thing down, but we do say its big enough. It is capable of handling the city air needs that we see coming, and even more than capable if we get a successful rail strategy. We see an increase in the number of people with a corresponding decrease in the number of aircraft. It is now the priority of the city and state jointly to clean up the environmental and social disruptions that occured during the last 10 - 15 year growth of the airport.

To add one more initial to our model, I'd like to add the letter 'R' for reality. The policy plans of the city and state have often been critized as unrealistic. I feel that they have proven to be very realistic. In point of fact, the fight that was really waged by Massachusetts was started by former Secretary

Volpe, and led by Governor Sargent with some fair participation by Mayor White, to change the interstate highway program so that the 3/4 of a billion dollars in federal money that was to come to the Boston area for the interstate program can be used instead for rapid transit. That fight was won. The same number of construction dollars are going to come into the Boston area if we're smart enough to use them. Congress recently mandated the secretary of transportation to develop high speed rail in the northeast, and committed a half a billion dollars to accomplish their goal. It can also be pointed out that with the new relocation and environmental requirements, the old set of policies that had been pursued were quite unrealistic. Under today's laws those interstate highways would not be built. What the transportation policy needs is two things: some recognition of some structural problems of the Boston metropolitan area, and political support. Attitudes such as that of Ed King of the Port Authority can only be considered counter-productive.

Often people in business communities are heard to say that politicians never get together. The mayor and governor, although of different political parties, have been pursuing almost identical transportation policies , for three or four years now. I feel that this is an enlightened kind of policy. Whether or not you like what's happened in the world over the last ten years, the world has changed and certain realities have to be dealt with. They are not realized by a state agency and a public running off with its own transportation policy independently. These structural problems must be recognized, and the head of the Port Authority or entities like it ought to have its executive director serving at the pleasure of the governor. It is necessary that when the chief executive of the commonwealth, in response to pressure from the municipal leaders in the metropolitan area, has chosen a certain transportation strategy, he must be able to implement that strategy and he deserves to have state agencies that follow and fit into that policy. In terms of political support, a specific problem exists; there is in the legislature right now the question of the third harbor crossing. The mayor has relayed to the legislators that we really think that the facility is a useful one. The one problem we face is that the airport is run by the Port Authority and we want an assurance that the tunnel will not be used to go off on an increase of the airport again because all of a sudden they have new access. If we can be assured that the plan as presented by the governor will be implemented, as the policy directly states, then we would vigorously support the building of the third crossing. In the absense of some real commitments that we can believe, we'll indicate that we are not against it, be we can't really get in there and support it very strongly. The proposal might very well die in the legislature since it has only that kind of lukewarm support. The natural constituency for that tunnel ought to be the airport. The state is proposing to spend $200 M for a facility which is exclusively to bring people and goods into the airport. For a $200 M gift the people from the airport should be in the state house lobbying to beat the band. Instead they are breaking its legs. It's time for the business industry to take a look at the transportation policy that we have put together. It is a sensible one from all aspects of the city. We have good, realistic direction, the money is there to do it and it needs political support to accomplish it.

Alan Altschuler: I'd like to add an 'A' to the model - accountability. I agree certainly with the vast majority of what both speakers have said and I want to look at it from a slightly different set of perspectives. Firstly, we have gone through a terrific transition in transportation policy in the last five years, and there are still many people who find that hard to understand. I regret to say that this position is overwhelmingly represented by the business community. I think it is a mistaken view. The transition is not new. 75 years ago there were only 8000 autos in the U.S. and 50 years ago the railroads were where you put your money. Everyone was confident that trucking could never amount to an effective competitive force, particularly for inter city movement of freight in the U.S. And 25 years ago we were just really beginning the dramatic demise of transit railroad systems in the U.S., and we were in the beginning of the era where the priority shifted dramatically to the development of air transportation and highway transportation in the U.S. The priority of the country was to move faster and more smoothly.

In 1956, a landmark year, the Port Authority was established and came into operation in 1959. In 1956 Congress also enacted the interstate highway program. In 1958, jet aircraft came into commercial service. Within 10-12 years of the policy initiative, a very dramatic new period of transition in transportation policy had bred massive counter reactions. There was eminent domain involved to a scale never experienced in the U.S. urban areas before. Citizen participation was sweeping the country, starting with the civil rights movement, and sweeping to all other areas of public activity in the U.S. A while series of laws and expectations were developed which really shaped the environment of law and culture within which we have been operating. Many of the projects that were stopped in the last couple of years were in tune with the political culture of 1960. They were stopped becuase 10 years later they hadn't really moved. If they had moved to the point of implementation, people might really regret some of the harm that they caused, but they wouldn't really be controversial. Mass turnpike and the Southeast expressway could never be built today. It is important to understand, especially as a public official in a democratic society, when the time for a certain kind of thing has past. You must shift to new things. Usually public officials are slow in recognizing this and private citizens bring it to their attention.

Secondly we note that we do face some serious problems today. There is a fantastic contridiction between the collective and individual behavior of the Americans in the field of transportation. There have been more cars driven every year, and less and less mass transit used. This contradiction is really one of the most serious problems of American society, even though in a short run sense, it isn't a serious issue for public officials. However, in a long term sense, it's important that public policy set itself against it. There is an argument that is very difficult for public officials to face, that is even though the Arabs have lifted the oil embargo, we should severely limit oil imports and inflation and of transportation policy as well. The kind of contradiction between intelligent collective policy and reluctance to set one's self against the private behavioral patterns of the mass public is very serious and perhaps unresolvable.

How did the old transportation policy, for highway development in particular originate? That policy was not the product of any deliberate public policy making, in the state of Massachusetts. Nationally, a conviction developed in the late 40's and early 50's on the parts of the major industries in the U.S. that the level of automobile and truck construction could not be sustained unless we had a major highway program and unless the people were buying all of those cars and could drive them in a relatively uncongested fashion. It was a nationally massive, industry led campaign without very much activity at the state and local levels, that produced a national program which produced 90% federal aid. An overwhelming set of national incentives was created for states and localities to basically build a standard model transportation system in every region of the country. Through the Governor's task force on transportation a couple of years ago, we called in the DPW week after week to try to understand the planning rationalefor the highway systems in the Boston region, and we found that there really was no planning rationale. So where are we today? I think that we are in a period when because of the law and culture under which we operate, certain things are not possible, Other things are possible if we operate successfully in a democratic society, It is important that we maximize the opportunities and not lament the impossible dreams even though we may think that they are desirable dreams. It is not possible, as Fred was saying, that anybody could build those expressways today. It is contrary to law as well as to the culture of the Boston region. It is possible for us to make uprecendented progress (at least in the last 60 years) in the field of mass transit. That's an opportunity that should not be lost. It is vitally important that we exploit what might be a relatively passing opportunity. I say "relatively passing" for this reason: We are ahead of the country right now, there is federal aid available to mass transportation, if we go get it. We can hook into systems of mass transportation with rights of way that are invaluable. We can produce a transit system as modern as any in the country, to go with a land use pattern, which for a hundred years has been shaped fundamentally by transit access for the region. The Mayor and the Governor

jointly have been pursuing that policy. Within the last year they have had some good legislation out of the general court, but I think that it is fair to say that the general court is somewhat lacking as a collective institution, in fully grasping the opportunities that are before them at the present time. It is terribly important that it not be just some executives, who are trying to explain that to the general court because the general court responds to very broad bases.

Let me use the harbor crossing for an example. It is a special purpose crossing for passenger buses trucks and emergency vehicles, two lanes, one in each direction, from South Station to Logan Airport. It is a system that emerged primarily from the transit planning analyses rather than the highway analyses from the Boston Transportation Planning Review. Transit requires an exceptionally flexible system that can reach well beyond 128, can carry people without transfers, people with baggage people who are affluent and can pay higher prices on trips that they take infrequently as opposed to commuter trip that downtown employees have. It became apparent that the way of attracting autos to the Logan Airport market is the fastest growing generator of traffic in the Boston region, was to build a lot of highway access into Logan, and keep on building more parking. The alternative program was to hold highway capacity and parking relatively steady and putting the investment into improved common carrier access to Logan. This would be a way of by-passing congestion, a way of giving transit a very high reliabilty and speed by comparison with the competitive automobile mode. The third harbor crossing affords a way of doing that by avoiding the Sumner and Callahan tunnels and the Central Artery. We had to go to Washington to get special legislation to have it included as eligible on the interstate system, since that has been a general purpose highway system. Here was afacility that didn't raise too many ideological problems by using highway money for it because bus lanes have so often been a subject of highway money, in the past. A congressional delegation was extremely helpful on a non-partisan basis, special legislation was passed by Congress last year to make it eligible for 90% federal funding. There is legislation now to make it possible in this state and we have a deadline 3 months from now to make it possible. It is in very deep trouble and chances are more than likely now that it will fail. It will fail for two reasons: Firstly, it's in the middle range between what's possible and impossible. People tend to respond tostereotype images of what they're for and against. Those who are basically in love with highway construction in this area, some very powerful interests, are fundamentally involved with general purpose highways. Although they support this project, they support it lukewarmly, many of their strongest legislative supporters are saying "we wouldn't even dream of enacting legislation for a special purpose tunnel or nothing." So, the anti-highway supporters have taken the position that either they'll sit this one out since it's not really what they are accustomed to, or because they don't like Logan Airport, or because some of the political heroes of the pro-highway transit, anti-highway forces have taken a position against it. The structural difference between the Port Authority and the state is involved here. The Port Authority Board, a body which has a pretty good sense of the world around it, voted 7-0 in support of this project. The staff and lobbyists are lobbying against it because the executive director of the board is insistent upon alignment through the middle of East Boston, instead of an alignment which brings the road into Logan Airport. He considers that the Mayor and the Governor are completely wrongheaded because they think that it is better to force a reorganization of airport parking, with a 600 foot strip of land within the Airport. It would have to be somewhat rearranged. They think that it is better to do that than to put another road through East Boston. Despite this and his own board's instructions, he is going his own merry way and undercutting this project. Ed King is becoming responsible for killing the biggest investment project slated for Logan Airport between now and the end of the century. What I'm trying to do is to highlight the range of constraints under which we operate, the importance of operating in some ways like a surfer riding a wave, trying to exploit that wave rather than lamenting what you can't surf agains the waves. Finally, recognizing that there are some things, very innovative, new and important, that may be very difficult to do both because of the structural arrangements

within which we operate and also because of the mental pictures that people carry around in their minds.

Speaker: The discussion that we've heard so far illustrates the real benefit and the real need of these meetings for business, academic and government guys to get aquainted and share similar facts and to learn to trust each other.

Dick Segal: Could you elaborate a little bit more on the different type of outlook for transportation. You said that there has been a shift, could you talk a bit about the constituent parts of the new ideology, the anti-highway ideology?

Alan: Well, let me say that we're talking here only about something that is happening in Boston. Some major movements that have become embodied in state and national law. For example, 3 or 4 important pieces of legislation which have shaped policy in the last few years, Congress has passed major environmental laws. They brought all of the proposed alignments of major proposed highways in the Boston area into being rendered essentially ineligible.The Southwest expressway was suppose to go through the middle of the Fowl Meadow reservation I-95 north was supposed to go through the Lynn Woods. Those projects ~~will~~ would get thrown out in the courts and alternative alignments, which were feasible under the status of the law, were politically unfeasible. You could take the Southwest expressway around the meadow, but you would be running through some residential areas. I-95 could be a reconstruction of Rt. 1, as an expressway down the middle with access roads on either side. When this was proposed businessmen along Rt. 1 rose up in such rage that the legislature prohibited the construction I-95 north. A law passed in 1970, the Uniform Relocation Act, applying not only to transportation, but to all programs saying when you dislocate people they have a right to decent, safe and sanitary housing, which is also comprable to what they had before, at least, in the immediate environments from which they are being dislocated. The inner belt was going to dislocate 2500 families. In Cambridge the redevelopment authority has found it virtually impossible to relocate 40 families a year over the last decade. When talking about conforming to the Uniform Relocation Act when building the inner belt, it is an impossible task. The Mass. electorate in 1972 passed a constitutional ammendment providing that if you want to take land from conservation use and transfer it to non-conservation use of any kind, it requires a two-thirds vote of the entire legislature. In order to build the Southwest expressway as planned, or I-95 north, quite aside from the federal law involved, you needed a 2/3 vote of the state legislature. To do that without the support of the entire greater Boston legislature, which the constiuencies of each would surely oppose was impossible. Federal law provides that you have a very elaborate public hearing process before you move forward with projects. With such processes citizens have hope, they are no longer resigned that they cannot stop the government. These processes, which I think are good things, even though they have a mobilizing effect, cannot be ignored, by elected officials. There is highly emotional opposition to highways being built through recreational and residential areas. The urban renewal projects, including their highway programs which were unique urban experiments were also brought down in this way. They tried for the first time, with a generating of massive negative reactions, eminent domain on a large scale in urban areas. But we never had tried to do this before in already developed areas. The urban renewal program essentially went through a rehabilitation program, model cities kind of programs, slum clearance and that kind of thing. The highway program found it much more difficult to do that, but in the 70's the highway program is gradually shifting to one of improving existing rights of way, to dealing with safety matters, to trying to find places where you can construct a right of way without going through neighborhoods like the third harbor crossing. Both programs were really brought down by being in conflict with some fundamental American precepts and cultural attitudes, which were not immediately apparent when the programs were developed, but which appeared soon after they were prposed. Transit, everybody was ignoring, and nobody really understood that building all of these highways and changing the land use patterns was going to undermine the place of the transit systems and not only bring about a deterioration of the quality of life for those who continue to use those transit systems, but a massive tax demand if they were to be sustained at all. And a massive threat

as well to the land use patterns that depended on the transit access. Much of the transit deficit problem~~s~~ that we have today is a product of the competition from the automobile mode which has sapped transit patronage so that it is about 1/3 of what it was in the late 40's. This reflects something very basic that has been happening nationally.

ifford: It would be valuable to work out some kind of equal time procedures here. We have heard some very succinct, candid and honest statements about some of the reasons for the existing transportation policies in the Commonwealth and in the city of Boston. I think that the value of bringing people with different perspectives together ~~and~~ is to let them listen to each other and to discuss with each other. I have heard what I consider some wrongly alarming assumptions about the relationship between the job market and transportation. For example, the statement that blue collar jobs both can be, and should be and will be encouraged in Boston without highways to bring the raw materials to a manufacturing plant. Without such roads to take a finished product away, you pay a penalty as a manufacturer to do business wherever such conditions might exist. That is only one of the reasons why New England, as well as Massachusetts over the last 20 years, have lost and will continue to lose manufacturing jobs. The other one is the availability of raw materials and natural resources of all kinds. What is increasing is the service job sector at a very rapid rate. The only blue collar jobs employers of any size are the government at all levels and Logan Airport, which is the largest blue collar employer other than the government in this area. The pattern will continue. The remaining blocks of industry in Boston are anxious to move out to where they're supplies can come in simply and at low cost. The analogy of the garment industry of New York is apt and exact. Trucks can't handle those small streets. That is not an argument, however, for constructing highways into the heart of Boston, but it is a plea that those responsible for the transportation policies and programs not raise~~d~~ expections of the populus at large that Boston can become revived as a manufacturing blue collar job headquarters. It won't happen and it can't happen. What can happen is an understanding that somehow or another the service sector of the economy could be encouraged and expanded. That, to pick up on what Fred was saying about Boston's livability, as a place to be and people liking it and its proximity to the Cape and the mountains and whatever, transit is an important part of that and that an expansion of the transit system will help the livability. Its prefectly suited to service type jobs, but it is not suited to manufacturing or blue collar jobs. This same thing is going on in Cambridge, in Roxbury and the old Southwest corridor, where the folks out there believe they're going to get industry into that corridor, well, they're not. It would have to pay a huge penalty to get the goods in and out. Well, it won't happen, they're going to go on Rt. 495 and Rt. 128 if we're lucky enough to keep them in Mass, which we probably won't be able to anyway, or even in New England for that matter. It's a plea to people making transportation policies to please be realistic and honest about what can and will happen to the job market, accept the implications of not building the highways — it's a further discouragement to blue collar jobs. That may be fine in terms of a long range pattern of growth for Boston and the greater Boston area. It may be what is intended, but in the same way the secretary has described that it is not a transportation policy which prevents those roads from being built, it is an environmental policy about the woods. It is a political response to business men who don't want their firms moved and it is the impossibility of finding relocation for 2400 people. Not any of those three are transportation factors. They impinge seriously on it, but they are not transportation factors. It is a plea to try when you're doing your plans, and I know that Alex in his own BRA plan is focusing in on this, recognizing the fact of the growth and the service sector, that that's where Boston ought to recognize that encourage it and adopt its policies of all kinds to reinforce that growth.

Hank: In the interest of equal time, let's get a couple more comments out.

Speaker: Your planning assumes that there is a reasonable alternative to driving in this city, and I think that the reality is that you haven't got it right now. For example,

if you get on the bus line at Forest Hills to Prudential, if you haven't got 35¢ in change you're turned away. That's going to turn a lot of people off. If you live in Dorchester, and you want to get to Prudential you must take a bus to Ashmont into Park Street out to Prudential. It's a lot tougher than getting in your car. So the reality is you haven't got a suitable alternative right now, and I think that business will support you. We think we need a good system in this city, having moved additional people into the city in the past year. We believe in this, so you've got our support if we can get to the point where we're coming up with reasonable alternatives.

Hank: This is sort of a marketing concept.

Speaker: In other words another thing that's in the paper is the communiter tickets that employees would give up. I can't go to our company because the system is poor.

Hank: I share that because the old illustrations, you won't get me on the Plymouth-Brockton railroad as long as I have to stand in the rain to get on the bus. For just a few thousand bucks you could put up a shelter. There's going to be a big south station someday, someday, but in the meantime you'd be in the rain. WITH

F.Glimp: As a non-business guy here who does appreciate the intelligence which some of the positions ~~that~~ have been laid out. I accept some of the elements of the new balance which effects the transportation system, but I have a problem. It seems to me while most of us would accept the absolute need for public coordination by elected political officials and the people who work for them, in something like transportation, say how it related to economic development, or housing, or other topics we're talked about here, I do think there are alot of thoughtful people who would question the wisdom of a complete political public lock on what happens, say on questions of economic development as they relate to transportation. I can understand why we see great opportunities in the middle run to create mass transit, somehow. I really doubt the wisdom of trying to get control of everything in order to achieve that job. What bothers me more than anything is not so much that everybody's hopping on Ed King but the assumption that you really ought to have complete control of what happens.

Bill: The only think I could tell you is that there are a lot of different business audiences that have heard both Fred and Alan go on and I must confess that over 2-3 years time they've become quite articulate, and on more than one occasion I've had business people say to me you know these guys, Salvucci and Altschuler they're talking about some good things. They want to clean up the environment, they want to get rid of our over populated automobile city and they want to make some significant changes in the world, and what's so wrong about that? And it's a difficult question to answer, But the only one I've come up with is my only objection, that I think they want to do it by 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, and that's one of the major differences I think that has been going on in the transportation policy field. There's a tendency to deal in absolutes, and I think too many of our visions have somehow been translated into realities which the business community isn't quite ready to accept. I think it's incorrect to leave the business people in the room with the impression that the business community has been fighting solely for highways. I think that was a characterization of our postion through the highway restudy, because we were one of the more outspoken groups on wanting to balance transportation, we had a different definition of it. There are alot of things in which we are agreed now that are important, the harbor crossing. We agree, the decisions have been made, this is now a logical alternative, and we haven't been half hearted or talking out of both sides of our mouth. The major difficulty is and to a certain extent the environmental protection agency now is falling into the same kind of very difficult problem which is they are trying to achieve visions, or achieve goals of objectives in a time frame that has made their means unreasonable and unacceptable, and to a certain extent that's been our differences on transportation policy I hope at a future meeting we can have more time to discuss those in detail, I think they're important.

Hank: Any other comments?

Joe: Just one question, I was confused as to why Ed King was trying to undercut the third harbor crossing, was it because he wanted the general purpose tunnel or because

he wanted it through the center of East Boston or because he wanted a general purpose tunnel through the center of East Boston?

Speaker: The answer is his first choice would be a general purpose tunnel through the center of East Boston, with the maximum potential to being extended to a Southwest expressway on I 95 north. He is I think, prepared at the moment to accept a small tunnel, particularly if he can view it at the first stage of what might become a bigger project at a later time, but he is unwilling to see it affect his property.

Hank: That brings up an interesting point, that some of these issues sometimes might be very good for the state or regional economy, and might have great environmental infringements upon the people of Boston, so there are some tradeoffs.

Fred: My view is manufacturing is gone from New England to the Southern U.S., Japan, to southeast Asia seeking lower wages, among other things, and that is extremely unrealistic that manufacturing is going to come back to Boston, whether or not we build highways, transit or what have you. My point was viewing that situation the little blue collar stuff that we've got left in the city I think is here for one of two reasons; because of gravity or because its convenient to be here because they're close to downtown and if you make 128 and 495 more convenient to the downtown through highways I think you further undermine the very little that we have left.

On the point of the responsiveness and whether the government ought to have a lock hold on public agencies, I feel yes, if something is a public agency, they ought to be accountable to the elected officials. If it's not a public agency then it lives within a different framework of laws.Like Ed King or not like Ed King, I don't think that's atolorablesituation to have a director of an agency headed in a different direction, than the chief executive officer of the commonwealth on transportation. When the chief executive officer is saying we're going to build transit tunnels, develop decentralized terminals, have a bus tunnel to Logan Airport, and the port authority, is busy building another 3000 parking spaces and is refusing to make room for that tunnel, that's an intorable situation. Itdoesn't make sense. King maybe right, but I don't think that the solution is trying to separate out the merits of the arguments that King is right, then his views should persuade the political process andwe should be building highways and parking lots at Logan. But we should not be saying we're going to spend $200 M on a bus-truck tunnel to Logan, and we're going to at the same time, because the port authority doesn't agree with that policy not make room for it at Logan and instead build 2000 more parking spaces. My feeling is yes,there has to be responsive leadership, That doesn't mean the public offi is a puppet.Bruce Campbell who is the DPW commissioner isn't suddenly a mad environmentalist, he is no puppet. He does work for the Governor, and when the governor makes a decision that we're going this way, Bruce falls into line. He let's the Governor know his views, and lets Alan know his views, That view is heard. but then the decision is made and is sent in a direction. The difference between a Bruce Campbell who let's his views be known, but basically is part of government and an Ed King, who says I'm going to go my own way, is an important one.

Hank: We're at one end of the continuum,Some people think Ed King would be a good guy to run the MBTA.

Alan: One of Ed'sproblems is he won't touch mass transit. I don't want to leave the impression that Fred and I agree about everything. We have arrived at most of the samepolicies not always by identical reasoning, but in regional and statewide terms I tend to agree more with Dun Gifford than with Fred in the industry argument. In regional and state terms we can't loose a job by the highway if there's something that may be lost in downtown Boston. It should be in the Boston region. It will be out near 128 or 495 or Mass. Turnpike or some place, and there's plenty of industrial land with good highway access in this region. The lock hold problem, we're not trying to take control of everything in the Sargent administration. The special problems of the Port Authority don't even relate to the Port Authority board, which went 7-0 on those particular project. They relate to a particular guy, who's dynamic manager but who's an absolute bull, who won't bend on anything and who also has a constituency which supports him publically even though they know privately that his bullishness may be preventing tremendous things from happening to the region.

Finally let me pay my debt to the business community because I was emphasizing one aspect. The business community has been excellent in support of the mass transit, the third harbor crossing. There are certain elements of it which remain undoubted preoccupied with some of the issues of the past, but the key leaders of the business and the downtown area particularly, have pretty well put past issues into the past and are concentrated constructively today on some of the key issues of the present.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program April 17, 1974

Dinner Meeting

Bob Kenny: I think a lot of people are going to be disappointed tonight. Number one we're not talking about a downtown plan, which is an outmoded approach to what's happening in the city, we're talking about a growth program. I think that even when we change the words, people are going to expect that we're going to come tonight and say how the city is going to grow over the next 10, 15 or 20 years, and again that's not true. We changed from a manufacturing economy, to a high grade service economy. We feel this growth will continue, but again the exact extent of it is one of the issues that we wanted to discuss with this group and one of the reasons why we've had these seminars. In the 1970's and 1980's we begin to see a different trend, not a totally different framework, but we see the momentum that has been built in the 1960's. We find that in Boston we have an image, a unique charm, and unique human scale, and in effect we're beginning to surface above most of the other cities. What we see in our growth program in the 1970's and 1980's is how do we continue this momentum but in the same time begin to perserve and maintain the charms that we have in Boston. And so as we look ahead, we're really not going to come out, with the plans for the Jordan Marsh development, or the plans for the new arena, or a specific set of plans because we don't have them. What we're trying to do is focus on a framework for growth areas. Things are going to change, one building will go ahead and one won't go; there are sites that we'd like to see development on and others we wouldn't; and there are areas we'd want to change and others we wouldn't. So the growth program, which in people's minds were looking for a downtown plan in which is would have been a great deal easier to come out with a plan that had a price tag of $40 million on it which was a pretty picture of utopia. When there was $40 million in Washington that we could get, then that would be a different approach. What we're trying to say is that the growth program, the future plan for the city in the downtown section, is going to be a framework of controlling, channeling rather, not control but channeling and guiding private investment, enhanced by public investment. We fully realize the city has to make a committment to its growth.

One of the key elements of this growth program is going to be a total rewriting of the zoning codes of the city, because the zoning code in the city that is so full of variences that in fact it's no code. What we want to do is set up an incentive zoning system, one that's fair, one that everybody can see exactly what the city looks for, what can happen on this land, or if they want to change that there's flexibilty built within it, but within certain guidelines. One of the key elements in this incentive zoning system is merely to point out the direction of it. We have set up three types of areas in the downtown; conversation areas, areas that we want to stay the way they are; a control growth area and a development area. The zoning code would be channeled and written differently for each one. Obvisouly the key conservation areas are Back Bay, Beacon Hill, the area around Faneuil Hall, (but we do have some new areas that we want to see remain the way they are there), the North End and the area around the Customs House, Broad Street, (there are some fine old buildings in that area), and we fell that with the general deal of development that has taken place in Government Center, and in the waterfront, and some of the selected development that will take place in the financial district, that there ought to be a new section, a conservation area. That doesn't mean that no development will take place there, but it means that there will be a high degree of preservation in the existing buildings. We also have development areas, areas most of which are familar to you, West End, Government Center, Waterfront, areas that we've been working on for a number of years, such as South Station, and a proposed area Park Plaza. That doesn't

mean that within a particular area such as that, that there shouldn't be preservation and restoration for some of the existing buildings, but the main thrust in those areas will be towards fairly complete rebuilding. We also feel that our zoning controls will be to allow more development. When we get into control growth areas we get into for example, the financial area, we want to see somewhat between a conservation area in terms of controls and a development area. There are a number of key selected sites, in fact one part of the growth program that we're developing will outline the major potential office sites for the next twenty five or thirty years in the city and you can begin to pick them out right now. We know for instance, in Post Office Square that the Federal Reserve Bank site is going to be vacant, which is an excellent site for future office building.

In the future we see areas around Cambridge Street, the Canel Street area around the North Station, again as a development area, one that will not require future or total clearance or massive development, but one that will require selective redevelopment. I neglected to mention some of the future development areas that we should focus on. North Station, looking at an aerial view sees its potential proximity to Government Center, the West End which is being completed, the Waterfront project, the North End and we see the vast amount of land there. That's an area that once the dam is built will be an area that could stand substanially new development, especially if we're able to move the Garden down to South Station, which I feel we're going to be able to do. One of the biggest land areas in the city that we look on as a future development area and which the growth has to be controlled, is the area across from Fort Point Chanel. As the South Station area begins to move we will increase growth in that area and if you really look at this land area to relation with the downtown we're talking about 50% of the downtown land area, which should have a great deal of future growth. This incentive zoning system that we're developing, will set guidelines for each one of these areas, to set a direction for growth. I think we want to make sure that there is flexibility to take into effect future changes in the economic system. One of the problems we're running into, everybody says you were working on this things for two years, you really ought to have all the answers by now. When you begin to deal with each area individually, to have realistic controls, you find you have to think and spend a great deal of time analyzing land values, ownership, particular functions of an area and takes more time than anybody anticipated. This growth program will not take place without significant amount of government reactions. We recognize that the city has to be prepared to come forth with specific actions, that will begin to enhance the environment, and encourage development.

There are some very serious problems in the city that is the public sectors responsibility to work to a great extend to correct. One of them that's facing us into the future is the reaction of the automobile and pedestrian. Our growth program recognizes that in a number of sections of the city that we have to allow and enhance the pedestrian amenities. It's important to recognize that at the peck hour on Washington Street approximately 1,000 people travel by automobile and 6 or 7,000 people pass on foot and yet the amount of space devoted to the automobile is two or three times the amount of space devoted to the pedestrain. We've got to get a better balance.

We also realize that as we look at the unique charm of Boston that we need more small parks. We've seen the success of the park at Franklin Street and Filene's, and another built at School Street. We're going to start construction this summer, believe it or not, on a park at the corner of Washington, Boylston and Essex Streets, which is right in the heart of the combat zone. One of the most fascinating subjects that our planning staff is working on is a study of the combat zone. It's been torn down, supposedly, several times and what we're going to do now is by working with a number of community groups, a number of people that frequent the area and the business that are there, beginning to work out a program for recognizing that we need a combat zone, or we're going to have a combat zone in this city no matter what we do. What we really ought to do is to control that area. One of the reasons that the combat zone is a blighting influence, is not so much what goes on but the physical deterioration of the neighborhood. That doesn't necessarily have to take place in a combat zone, and that's really what we fell the city should begin to look at. To make this area work there had to be an enfusion of public capital to rebuild some

of the physical amenities and this park happens to be of the first. There will be parks for instance around Faneuil Hall, also around the Customs House. Its space that isn't necessarily needed and yet small parks spread through out the city will enhance the charm of Boston. A park will be constructed in front of the old Record American building, one in front of church green on Summer Street, there will be several parks within the new development taking palce in Bedford west. This, we feel, is the public responsibility. It is also public responsibility to rebuild some of the streets, which has been a classic public responsibility.

The difference now a days is that we feel we have to get a better balance between the pedestrian and the automobile, not that we agree with some that we in any way want to ban automobiles downtown. We will be building new parking garages, we will be tearing down some of out old ineffecent parking garages, but we do recognize that there has to be a balance between the two of them. We do feel that the pedestrian in certain key sections of the city does not get a fair shake.

Another important program we're working on is trying, our transportation staff is setting up some roots for a mini bus system to move people throughout the city. Those are the key ingredients of our downtown program incorporated with it will be some landmarks legislation so that we have a stronger program of perserving older buildings.

I do have one picture tonight to show you what we've conceived for Washington Street. Within the next two months we'll go to the City Council for a major bond issue to begin the actual detail design and construction of this mall. For a long time people have wanted to close Washington Street completly. It was tried and was unsuccessful. There will be room for automobiles, parking lanes, sidewalks widen, trees planted, and on certain occasions the street will be closed for street fairs. But that we find we can maintain a good mix between auto traffic and pedestrian traffic by doing some of these things. A question asked now is where will the traffic go. The problem with Washington Street was it was the only northbound street, so we'll change the direction on Chauncy Street from southbound to northbound.

What we wanted to do tonight was open up some of our basic policies so that the theorical questions or the way we heading in it, so we can open up a discussion. We want these ideas discussed and questioned, so people could say what are you going to do about this, and if one of us didn't have the answer we'd look for it tomorrow. That's the function that we want to see here, and it's taken us alot longer to do. People want us to come out with a book called the downtown plan, and read the summary and say we now have a plan. What we really want to do is come up with a framework, a concept that's useful, and used whenever it is read. That's where we're heading and hope to have it out sometime this summer.

Bill: It seems to me that this plan tends to put downtown Boston on foot, and if that's true then you need some sort of mini bus. But can these great stores exist? How do you carry packages home, get deliveries, the whole thing is a distribution system. This is a beautiful plan and I'd love to see if it that problem could be worked out.

Bob: We're past the concept, there's not question that you need the automobile, just looking at the downtown environment right now you're finding more people on foot than in automobiles. Those on foot are having trouble moving around. We're not in the camp of being anti-automobile, we're just trying to find a better balance. We feel that by enhancing the environment that people will want to do more walking, and so we can build a garage that's a little of the center of things and they will walk.

Hank: I think the answer is when you last drove your automobile to Bart's store, you then had to walk.

Bill: I parked at a garage.

Hank: And then you walked to the store.

Bart: Nobody has the attitude that you've got to park in front of the store anymore. We've all grown up to understand that there has to be a balance. You speak about how we're going to get people around in the city, again you're talking avout balance on the pedestrian vs. the person who uses a combination of taxi, transit, mini bus, which hasen't worked too well. The city has to provide the basic amenities that go along with it. The streets were built for transportation and movement of vehicles and not for parking cars, and that's their primary purpose. Unless you do that first nothing is going to work down here, and I don't care what it is. If you do that you'll find

people coming to town who didn't come before. I think you have to start with some of the basic things first, like public services.

Bill: You know Bart, the one thing that blocks traffic is the big tractor trailers. I know the expense of delivering goods, but is there any chance of putting the merchandise in at off hours so the traffic can go? Gilchrists is very crowded. What's the problem?

Bart: I can't think of anything more unfortunate now for the city than to have Gilchrists vanish from the scene, as did a number of stores. Let's analyze Gilchrists, if you told them today, without providing for an alternative, that they had to vacate the same area they're using on Winter Street, which is a very expensive thing the city is subsidzing, and you also told them they had to get out of the passage way, which exists over the MBTA tunnel, and made available an underground passageway that was built in 1912, you'd drive them off the street. The question to have to ask is would you offset that with some other things at that time, that's a problem.

What I'm trying to bring out is this. The fabric of this city working, whether you're talking retail stores, or transportation, they do certain things that come first, and then they have embelishments to them, but they've got to be an operational funcational live thing that is performing something first. Take the retail stores, unless you get goods into them, you're not going to have employees working on them and you're not going to have customers coming into them. I'm back to your question of overtime on deliverance, if we say to the phone company you do these repairs and peform this service and do it all over time, you would have to ask the rate commission for an increase in your rates, your costs would go up, or you'd have to fire half your people, or do some damm thing to off set it. We don't have off street loading, and don't have people who want to work different hours, and they want over time when they work beyond the normal hours. So if you go to this kind of thing that's what you run into.

Bob Kenny: Because of the volume of goods we have to treat department stores differently then some of the speciality shops. We need some form of a centralized delivery system marshalled outside of the core city, to put all the boxes going to one store on one truck for one delivery per day. There should be a way to work this out.

Speaker: In regard ot the parking itself, you said you're going to demolish some of the obsolute parking facilities, could you indicate where the old is going out and the new maybe going in to pull this traffic out of the core.

Bob: There will be a major parking garage with 4,000 spaces at South Station. We have the Government Center garage with 1,800 spaces, and we will be building at least another 500 car garage in the same area.

Speaker: How about the new MBTA regulations that say you have to cut 20% of your parking by 1975.

Bob: The new EPA regulations, we do realize that in constructing new parking garages that we have to remove a number of spaces, we will be removing either vacant lots, on street parking spaces, around South Station there are several spaces that are ineffective that we would get rid of.

Speaker: How is the shuttle bus working with the Common Garage?

Bob: It's working well enough that we'd like to see it expanded.

Bill: Have you thought about putting the bus inside the garage, now you have to go outside to get it.

Bob: There are a number of mechanical things that have to be worked out, there's not any question that the general concept is a good one.

Hank: I'm interested in the basic issue you raised when you said some people may be disapointed because you don't have a specific bond plan. On the other hand if you did have a specific plan some of us might also say who in the hell are you for deciding what should be going on in our city. The way I read what you've said is that you're really kind of reafirming some conviction that free enterprise still has a place in the city, that you're going to try the proper environment for transportation system and traffic management systems, but you're going to let free enterprise still have some play in the development of the city.

Bob: In the past a lot of people have looked on a plan as just a collection of what's going to happen, but really all it is is a bookeeping of what the private sector

is going to do. In terms of commenting on my commitment to private enterprise I can quote three years we've spent with Mort Zuckerman who wants to privately develop Park Square, two years on building a new Boston Garden privately, but we feel it's so important to have a new sports arena that we might have to build it publicly, but this is only in the last extreme that we'd consider it. The other major developments coming are primarly privately funded.

Speaker: I noticed that you've drawn a line around the pier at the Wharf, which means the city is really involved in that area which is on the water as well as on the land. Are you going to have a program that will develop on the waterfront itself but will go all the way out to the pier head line.

Bob: Yes, we have an urban renewal project. Our development concepts along the waterfront is basically to maintain the irreglarity of the waterfront and to restore some of the old buildings rather than continuing the original plan of major high rise buildings.

Hank: Just to comment on the process that we've been involved in here, on Nov. 29th you had a lot of charts, forecasts showing new office buildings under construction, plans for proposed things, and tonight we're here with a couple of illustrations and may be a lot more emphasis on free enterprise. Could you comment Bob, on whether the activity that we've gone through here has contributed to your current posture compared with that on Nov. 29th.

Bob: One of the reasons that we did not focus tonight on the economic foundations and analysis that went into this is because we've already gone through it. One of the key parmeters of this downtown growth program is Alex's analysis of the economic future of this city, and what is the economic growth that's going to take place.

Hank: Suppose the service industry doesn't grow, do you feel comfortable about the hypothesis that banking and insurance is coupled with national growth. If national growth doesn't occur then the type of growth that we've had in Boston will slow down - suppose that's true.

Bob: I'm going to answer that question by giving my opinion and my staff's opinion on the fruitfulness of these discussions. As everybody knows that have been differences of agreement between some of our ideas and some of the ideas of the urban dynamics people in terms of the future of manufacturing growth in this city, or in any city, and we ought to be focusing on manufacturing growth. We have tried to encourage economic growth in this city, and we're lost in the last three years, and this is not a condemuation of EDIC because they've gained us some jobs but there are some basic economic trends that are still costing us manufacturing jobs that EDIC is slowing down. And that we should stand here as the city's planning agency and say that we're going to totally change that trend is unrealistic, and that's the difference of agreement between us and urban dynamics.

Hank: As you see it if the service industry grows you don't see it using up land that could be used for blue collar jobs?

Bob: The basic underlying economic trend of growth of the city is in the high grade service industry.

Hank: But there's not real man shortage, in other words if we had the economic opportunity to develop industrial jobs we could face the land for it.

Bob: In two months you could find 120 acres of Navy Yard land. I'm not saying we'll never get to that but we ought to recognize the strengths and the underlying factors in our economy.

Hank: Right now as you see it, it's some thing other than land that's preventing this city from industry, growth as opposed to service industry growth, isn't it?

Bob: No.

Lou: I think the issue has been perhaps over simplified. It's not so much that we either attract growth in the service sector or that we're going to be able to capture a lot of new manufacturing jobs, but the question what do we do with the residents of Boston who are currently unqualified, or who are coming through a school system which is going to insure that they don't meet the qualification for employment in a service industry, and who require some sort of income from employment from some industry somewhere. I wasn't saying we should tear down office buildings and build factories but that the balance between the residents in the city and where they're getting their

income from and what city actions are being taken in a sense of balancing jobs and people, needs consideration. I think both Bob and Alex have agreed that was a central issue.

Bob: Basically we're saying the service industry is going to grow, and Lou can rightfully ask how do you know. That's really why we've all been called together, and those are the questions what we've been saying in terms of manufacturing growth is that we do have to worry about providing jobs, but we have to recognize that we're running counter to some basic economic forces that we might be up against.

Speaker: Talking about the ship yard, there's a piece of property with all kinds of transportation, is there anything you'd like to tell us that we don't know about why that isn't being developed for manufacturing?

Bob: Yes, nobody wants to manufacture on it. Gerry's trying to get a new private ship yard in there. He's also tried to get manufacturing in there, but no one wants it.

Speaker: We in our wisdom, worked out a program and then nobody takes it, when do we do then.

Lou: We looked at several different alternatives, what we really looked at was a purely housing use, manufacturing or job creation use, mixes between the two, and the use of it as open space, don't do anything there, and rank those alternatives. The one that got the most points was putting in some kind of a manufacturing facility that provided more jobs for residents.

Speaker: But it was related also to housing, there was a blend there,

Hank: It's obvious we seem to have more houses than we have jobs.

Lou: That's really not true Hank, there are more jobs in the city than people who live in the city, but most of those jobs are taken by people who live outside the city, and that the housing stock is not closely related to the trends that we see in terms of the service industry providing more jobs.

Hank: Many of these questions can't be answered tonight, but how do you Bob want to summarize it.

Bob: What we wanted to do tonight was show the direction that we're heading, and see what concerns people had. Once the documnet is finished we plan to have intensive dialogues in each individual section. From a macro approach at this point we just wanted to begin to open the dialogue, and get people's concerns and questions and ideas of direction.

Gordon Brown: I'm fascinated to hear what Bob's outlined. I'm not so much worried about what I heard as what I haven't heard, because I presume behind this study there has been a recognization of the fact that the real problem is to create an environment where people can live and make a living. I haven't heard you talk very much about housing, most of the commerical construction in Boston is all commercial. I presume you've solved the economic issues between the trade offs between the unemployment problems in Roxbury and the influx of white collar workers who don't pay any taxes into Boston. I presume all the problems have been studied before you've decided on a very elegent solution to an idealist problem which 20 years from now will be a white elephant.

Bob: There are a couple of key points that should be brought up, in what we've been focusing on, the general framework of growth, and how we have not been focusing on within some of these growth areas what we were composing for usage. In the downtown area there are about 35,000 people, in ten years we think it will be 60,000 to 70,000. We think one of the areas of growth will be in the residential sector. The education system is one of the most critical problems the city faces today. And another is the preservation of our existing housing stock, and that again is tied to education. We also have to focus on the neighborhoods, or we'll have a downtown and wasteland in between. We're trying to prevent the fringe areas from decaying, and are studying different processes to prevent it.

Bill: Bob, at one point you mentioned that you felt the automobile had a larger place than it deserved downtown, and yet later you said you were thinking of building additional garages, why wouldn't you want to persuade that effort to public transportation?

Bob: My comment on the automobile was in reference to Washington Street.

Speaker: It looks to me on Washington Street that you're willing to compormise and then no one will win. Wouldn't it be better to make Washington Street entirely pedestrian and Chauncy Street entirely for vehicles?

Bob: The merchants need deliveries, we need taxis. In the urban scene today there are no absolutes, it's a constant compromise.

James Connely: We in city government are struggeling to preserve the middle class in the city of Boston, to make it an attractive place so people will want to bring up families here. We have a plan, that at the state level now, called the Racial Imbalance Law, which has been proported to be a civil rights type situation, and in the long run economic vitality in the city will be adversely effected by this sort of thing, not so much in terms of balck and white issues but in terms of preserving the cities tax base. 47% of the tax dollar is generated by downtown business. In the future the tax base will dwindle as a result of education policy dictated by the state government. The only way to solve this will be some sort of a metropolitan solution to the city's problems. It isn't so much a problem of aversion to an integration, but just a question of people in the city to preserve themselves going to a school inferior to their present school. People wouldn't mind if blacks from Roxbury went to school in West Roxbury, but wouldn't like the reverse, this will force property value to decline, people to look elsewhere for housing. It's crucial that this problem is addressed in future.

Hank: Back to the H.E.E.E.E.T. issue, where we can't work on one issue without being aware of how we're affecting all the others.

Speaker: There's a difference between racial imbalance and the quality of education. Jim, I think you made the mistake to blame the state board of education for something which perhaps is a legal issue. We'll have some kind of racial balance in Boston. We need better schools, and better products from our schools.

Jim: Racial balance is a formula whereby cities that have school populations greater than 50% will be balanced according to that formula, not integrated per say, 67 schools in the city of Boston are presently inbalanced with the short term racial imbalance plan they'll still be close to 40 schools still inbalanced, so clearly it's hypercritical, it can't be accomplished. You have to consider the way to accomplish integrated education and at the same time not be working against other goals in the city. You don't want a plan that will drive people out of the neighborhoods.

Bob: The reason we have the problem is because the school committee for the last nine years has refused to deal with the racial balance problem. This is why we need plan three so there will be a change in the basic system. The committee voted politically when the Lee School opened 4 years ago, it could have been balanced, but it wasn't, and the state had paid 65% of the cost of that school for balancing. There was a breech of faith.

Speaker: I'm making a plea to those involved not to raise false hopes amoung the people in the sense that there will be no bussing, and no problems come September, because there's just a fair to middle change that there's going to be those kinds of things going on. Let's make it as peaceful and aggreable a condition as possible. It's reasonable to say I wish it wasn't like this but it also occurs to me that it is like this and we'd better make the best of this.

Jim: No one's trying to improve educational capabilities, the safety of the kids, but we're delaying with political realities. It's easy to say the school committee hasn't shown leadership but there have been individuals in the past who have tried to maintain a moderate line. The people of Boston are basically a conversative lot.

Hank: Many of us business guys have been looking for a good vehicle to accomplish this. We're aware of the problems, and are just going to have to let it lie with the admission that we're all concerned. Alsto I think this group has taken a serious attitude toward these problems and we'll adjourn with the understanding that we'll meet again, and guided with good will toward working together on problems that we hope we can do something about. Thanks alot for coming.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee, Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program May 2, 1974

City Public Facilities and Capital Improvements

Hank Emerson: It seems as if today is the moment of truth in terms of going over the city's plans. We've been talking about things without much attention to dollar costs, and many of us have been involved in planning of private industry and have also found that planning tended to occur on different floors from budgeting and that hopefully at some point during the planning cycle the guys who work on these different floors can get acquainted with each other. Today we're going to have an opportunity to get an introduction to the fellows in city hall who are responsible for the fiscal management of the city. We'll begin to get some feel as to whether the various planning categories that we've covered since last November have any real relationship with the budget and the fiscal policy of the city. Alex Ganz will introduce the public sector people and our guest speaker.

Alex Ganz: Thank you. I'm pleased we have a good public sector representation from the Public Facilities Department, the BRA and EDIC. In addition to Bob Vey, Director of the PFD, we have Peter Scarpignato, Emily Lloyd and Naomi Isler. From the BRA is Fred Pikielek and Virginia Metcalf. And from EDIC Bill Semich. We're pleased to have the opportunity to bring all these people together. I'm pleased to introduce Bob Vey, who will go down in the history of Boston as the great school builder.

Bob Vey: Thank you. To be with Alex and Joe Barresi , Jim Young and Dick Wall I'd better be on my toes and tell the whole truth. First I'd like to describe a little bit the P.F.D. It was created in 1966 by an act of the legislature primarily to be the central building agency for the city. There was a period during the 1960's when the Urban Renewal program was going full blast, tearing down buildings throughout the city. But the city was very slow in responding by putting up new buildings, such as schools, and libraries and fire stations. The reason was that each department was responsible for their own building program and they really lacked the expertise to do it, so consequently it wasn't keeping up with the pace of the urban renewal program. The P.F.D., in 1966, was granted primarily to accomplish this building program, not only in urban renewal areas, but throughout the city. In addition it was given the responsibility to program, budget and contract for the alterations and repairs to the existing city owned buildings with the expection of the school buildings, for any work in access of $200, which now a days is practically everything. This has become a major part of our time allotment in our shop, to carry out this program. The dollar volume is way down compared to the new work, but the amount of effort that we have to put in to survey, evaluate needs, listen to requests of approximately 300 buildings throughout the city is just very time consuming. We have been spending almost $2M a year in an effort to upgrade the buildings and we've come a long ways, and we're pretty proud of the program. In addition we were given the responsibility to produce and keep up to date a ten year capital improvement program.

When I first came to the city in 1968, I found a high back log of buildings as I described earlier, particularly in the urban renewal areas, that had to be built. We immediately set out to construct these buildings and we did it as expeditiously as we knew how. To date we have completed 17 new schools, we have converted 6 buildings for school purposes, we're on the last lap of spending $52 M at City Hospital to renew their plant. We've built 6 new libraries, 2 police stations, 5 fire stations and 8 recreation buildings. In 1972 we began to see that we were catching up and we then began to look seriously at a ten year capital improvements program. Up to that point

we'd had one but didn't really know where we were going because we were trying to run so fast. We had to catch up with the past. The first thing that we did was to divide the city up into 16 districts which correspond to the exact same areas that the little city halls govern. The map on the left here shows the district and certain landmarks, and map in the middle we mapped out all of the improvements we had done from 1968 to present, and the map on the right is the work that we propose to have under construction by 1975. This particular district, as you can see, is Charlestown, where we have expended huge monies on public improvements in connection with the urban renewal program. I think that those of you who have been to Charlestown recently can see the general upgrading of the area and will agree that our money has been well spent. We created the 16 districts, mapped it out, we evaluated the needs of each district talking to BRA, Alex Ganz, the little city hall managers, community people, that plus the availability of what monies we had to expend and a general attempt to try to balance the improvements throughout the city, we came up with a solid 3 year program which we are now well into and amazingly enough we are keeping right on target. Even with the racial imbalance problems, the problems of getting environmental approvals and all of the other checkpoints that we have, we are staying on schedule so I'm happy with the plan that we came up with for three years. We're now attempting to expand that plan to a 5 year plan, which I think we can do realisticaly. But, beyond 5 years, the 5 to 10 year period, is really a program of purposes rather than an actual construction, hard lined program.

School Building Program

The best dollar value even now is still school construction, primarily because we get the 65% state reimbursement. We are now in the process of converting an old middle school in Dorchester, the Grover Cleveland. I was out there the other day and was delighted with how fast we're able to go. We're going to have it opened for next September even though we started in last October. The cost is $2.3 M, which is a great dollar value for what we're able to accomplish. I see the trend going in this direction, from new school construction to renovation. We're presently looking at Roslindale High, and what we find there is the building tucked into a very tight residential area with no hope of expsnding. To make it conform for state aid, we have to reduce the capacity, provide a larger gym, cafeteria, special reading rooms, etc. Instead of a 1400 or 1600 capacity, we'll probably drop it down to 1000 or even a little less. We will end up with a modern facility that meets today's standards. I see this as a trend and I like it because it happens fast. You can move into it, you have your site all ready, you can get your plans going and you get it done.

On today's market, with construction costs rising at the rate of 10-12% per year it's important that we get at it and that we get at it fast. We're going to continue in a moderate way with replacing fire stations, we're pretty well caught up with building police stations. We're looking to build one more in Forest Hills. There are some more libraries. We're going to build one in Dorchester Lower Mills and one in Codman Square, and perhaps a few more around the city at a moderate pace. We're continuing with our parks upgrading program. We're looking into, and we're going to try a pilot program this year, of creating off-street parking lots in the suburban shopping centers. That is an effort to try to provide parking to hopefully increase the business and maybe save some of the areas that are a little but marginal. We're also, in 10 districts this year, going to make substantial lighting improvements to try to get the shoppers out at night. One program that we're just beginning to look at is the problem of abandoned houses. It's really not completely in my domain at the moment, I don't know if its going to be but it's one that I personally find very interesting. There are many neighborhoods in the city, if we could get at them early enough, if on a street with say 20 houses, if we could find the 2 or 3 that are boarded up or abandoned, makes sense to get at it to tear it down and get rid of the blight and create some open area for various uses. This idea being thatmaybe we can sell it to the abbutters and they could have driveways for parking, or some additional lawn space or open area. There is a possibility that we may create a neighorhood residential parking lot. The key to that is the city would not want to run it. We would have to sell it to a neighobrhood group that would be totally responsible for it.

I find it exciting, I hope that we can get into it. Some of the houses, the Homestead Act has been proposed maybe we could save these. My feeling is that there is probably less than 10% that it even makes sense to try to save. I might cite a middle area that maybe by some subsidizing we could re-habit. I think it has to be a write down because I don't think it's financially feasible. Maybe the write down would be paid off by tax revenue that we would get in return when its improved. It's a new area that we have to look into anyway. That's the end of my presentation, any questions?

Alex: I don't want to add anything. Lou, do you?

Lou Alfeld: I did not write a paper for today, nor do I intend to do so for the next few meetings because they deal with issues I feel are either somewhat remote from the direct application of urban dynamics, in terms of the technical aspects of financing, or else they relate to issues that have already been covered. Two points I have about the plans and paper presented today. One was to point out the emphasis on public capital improvements that may tend to increase the attractiveness of basically local neighborhoods. We talked before not only of making them more physically attractive to retain people that are there but to be concerned with how many more people may be attracted into a neighorhood because of it. That could only happen of course if planners and city policy yeilds to pressures from developers and others to put up larger apartments, tenants buildings and the rest of it. I know that the city policy is not to expand in neighborhoods, but to stabilize them,and some of the pressures for increased population that may result from improved capital facilities might be channeled constructively into rehabilitation and for preservation of some of the old housing.

The second comment is related to the relationship between the expenditures that have been slated and taxes. The paper talks about the expenditures in terms of a projected gross city policy, something the total amount of goods and services produced by the city which has been going on, but doesn't directly relate it to any projections about the increased tax base and what taxes may be. Certainly we don't want to get into a situation where expenditures to improve the residential livability of neighborhoods, drive taxes to the point where businesses can no longer locate in the city, thereby undercutting the job base, thereby decreasing the resident incomes, which may wind up having the negative impact, and drain some of the vitality of existing neighborhoods. It comes back again to the issue of jobs and people and balances and consequently its accomplished. I have no specific comments about any of the plans, they all look very reasonable from a general viewpoint.

Community Participation in Schools

Speaker: I believe that you mentioned a figure of 17 new schools. My recollection is that a considerable number of these were community schools, which I think to many of us represents a new concept of how the school should serve the neighborhood both during school hours and the whole neighborhood during off-school time. I get the impression that along with the community school idea is coming a greater degree of community participation, at least in planning those aspects dealing with adult involvement in after school hours. Does this also carry with it a greater degree of community participation in what we normally think of as the daytime school program as well? Or will one sort of force the other if the experience is favorable?

Bob: That's an excellent question. I guess I'd best answer it giving you the history of the program. I'll try to keep it brief, but I think it is kind of interesting. We got involved in the community school program becuase it was recognized generally. that the plans for the building which included in most cases, a pool, a large gym, an auditorium, and various work rooms, should really be used more than from 8:30-3:30, or whatever the school hours are. So, we did get a program going which kept it opened after hours and weekends. It was a very tricky problem when we first did it because it was neither the school department's program nor city hall's. We're trying to split it without any clear operation guidelines. I stepped in and ran the thing by the seat of my pants for the firsy year, with really no authority to do it. It finally got recognized, an ordinance was put through the city council which gave us the power to run the program. When that ordinance was put through, it was more or less that the community school program would be run by us, in the off hours exclusive of the daytime

That's what has happened to date. Some of the community groups have tried to be more responsible than others. In general, they have not had too much to do with the day to day operation of the school. I think the referendum that is coming up is the important thing. Plan III, proposed by the Mayor, would be the same format primarily for running the schools as we do the community schools. If that goes through they'll have a lot to say about the manner in which the school is run. If it doesn't then I don't know.

Speaker: Bob, on the swimming pools, I keep hearing at the meetings that they are closed, are not being used, they are dirty, which goes right back to your department. What's the truth on that?

Bob: Well, I have a favorite saying, "If I sit there and hear nothing I have to assume that the program is an outstanding success". It's funny how you hear the negatives. I could produce the figures that would show that the pools are greatly used, and we haven't had one problem of contamination or anything like that. There have been a few incidents where there has been trouble, you would expect that. The figures are very favorable in the use of the pools. We are presently contracting with an outside firm to maintain and take care of them. Since I haven't heard anything to the contrary, I assume that it is successful.

Public Facilities and Neighborhood Stabilization

Speaker: Bob, do you feel that the large public expenditure of monies for capital improvements has stabilized residential neighborhoods? If so, how do you measure its stability?

Bob: Well, I think Charlestown is the best example. It's clearly our best and most successful. Public expenditures helped to put it over the top. I see a lot of these neighborhoods that we're pushing uphill and some will get over the top and maybe some won't. I don't know. I was asked the question in the Marshall School area the other day whether I thought the school would help the area. If you look at it the area generally is not as good as it was when we started the school. I counteract that by saying if we hadn't opened the school, maybe the area would be completly torn down by now. It's too early to really determine the impact of the school at this point. The Murphy School, for instance is clearly the binding force of that whole Neponset area. It's a tremendous success. Others, you can't tell clearly. East Boston has really been tied together also. The building of the police and fire stations are really just a business decision, where we're replacing buildings that are too expensive to maintain and are really inadequate to fulfill the need: some of the schools are in that category too. Many of the schools that we've replaced date back prior to 1900, not only are they expensive to maintain, they are really dangerous. They are built out of wood and are mainly class c construction. I would really like to do an evaluation of the very area that you're talking about and see if we could put some numbers on it. Alex is trying to predict into the future the impact our improvements will have in certain neighorhoods. Maybe we ought to test some of his projections with what's really happened after the fact. It's an area I have an interest in. Peter and I have talked about this, that we ought to go back and do an evaluation of how well that school is working and what effect it did have on a neighborhood.

Joe Barresi: I think that that is important. One of the questions that I have though is what criteria do you use and what objectives do you set up in deciding whether or not you're going to put the building up in the first place. If you had those objectives would they not be then your measuring criteria if you go back afterwards and say, well has it done what we wanted to do?

Bob: Are you referring primarily to a school building or any building? A school building is the hardest one. The new fire, police station or the library,it's clear that we can go back and see if it's accomplished what we set out to do, and I think in all cases we have.The school buildings are a lot harder to say whether we've accomplished want we wanted. What we're doing in some cases is to replace three older, outdated schools with one new, modern facility. The big spinoff of course is the community school program, where you can use the facility in the off hours. How you measure the value of a facility like that being available to a community in off hours I don't know. Except I know that many towns and cities don't have anything like it. How you

measure in dollar values, I have no idea.

Alex: Well, it's part of the strategy for the stablization and revitilization of neighborhoods and I think that we have pretty strong evidence that this is happening all across the city. The evidence being growth in property values, return to population and its growth, and a sense of neighborhood image and neighborhood direction. Right now we think that the signs are go go for many of Boston's neighborhoods, including the old neighborhoods and some of the inner suburbs.

Frank Pikielek: The answer to Mr. Barresi's question is not found only in what is the impact of one school project by itself, but how that is keyed into a lot of other things that are going on in each of the neighborhoods. Peter mentioned East Boston. That area has had nearly all of its parts rehabilitated in the last 5-6 years. There are one or two schools being built there and in addition to that there is housing that has been built and a lot of the community vitality that has grown up just as part and in response to these improvements that have been made by the city. It's not then, just the measured value of one facility, but what is the total impact of all the activity there. That's one of the reasons that Bob was mentioning about the parking lots, in an attempt to use public money as a catalyst for generating other types of investment.

Speaker: I'm not saying that you shouldn't devise a strategy and that you shouldn't try something but I think that after you've tried something as Jim says that you've got to measure it, and whether or not you achieved your objective. If you don't then you revise your strategy.

Speaker: May I try out one other thought here? In choosing between schools and libraries and fire and policy stations, I was wondering if any productive result might have come from thinking in terms of job producing kinds of public facilities, say like a factory building that would be very flexible and suitable for providing local neighborhood employment, suitable for shifting from one type of employer to another if such turns up. Is this role a possibility in this picture?

Bob: Well, this is really the EDIC, this is Gerry Bush's main objective. That's a little bit out of the public building and public improvements domain. Let me give you an example of something that we're looking at. There's a sight out in West Roxbury, the Hope's Lumber Co. which has been laying there right behind the shopping district, which is a very viable shopping district except for one horrendous problem. The traffic circulation and the parking is very inadequate. We're now making a study that might lead to the acquisition of that land, 8 acres, right behind the shopping center. We're interested in building a new fire station, a new police station and maybe a little city ahll, and the idea would be that maybe we could sell the rest of it off for a new residential off street shopping center. We've had an initial financial study done on it and it looked favorable. We're now trying to do it from a planning point of view and see if it works physically. That sort of thing makes sense. We do have now a condominiumlaw which would allow us to build a building and build it in excess of what we really need and sell it off either on a condominiumbasis or rent, to a private user. One interesting one that we have going in that is the old cold storage plant behind the MBTA power plant in the North End on the Waterfront. We are going to convert that to a fire house, and we don't need all of the space. We are going to try when we advertise for bids to get our station built to get a credit for the remaining space and hopefully a developer will come in and reuse the space, converting it with us approving the use. In that way we hope to write down the construction costs for the new fire station. We're beginning to explore the concept and I think that it makes some sense. Maybe we can use some of our buildings air rights, over parking lots, for example.

Joe: Well, if your talking about building a permanent little city hall I would hope that you'd wait until the program has some permanance to it. You talk about a program which is in the Mayor's office and has no other basis except that it's in the Mayor's office.

Bob: We would build it in such a way that it could be used for another use.

Speaker: I think that Joe's point is that you wouldn't try to get legislative authorization from the city council, isn't that what you were talking about Joe?

Joe: What I was saying was that Bob mentioned he was thinking of building a fire station, a police station and possibly a little city hall. Well, little city hall programs are still just Mayor White's program and that if he is Mayor forever that's fine, but I assume that he won't be and that unless it has some legislative support either in the form of ordinaces or other legal means, the building, a structure geared for little city hall operations may not be useful in the future.

Bob: Good point, but this would be a facility that could clearly be used for another purpose, either by sales or rental.

Financing Public Facilities

Speaker: Bob, I have a question about the financing of the public facilities. There are some papers here that Mr. Gordon prepared but I'm not sure I understand them all. It shows that to finance this badly needed and ambitious public facilities program, you are contemplating about $1/2 billion in new city bond issues, which would have the effect of doubling between the years of 1973-1977, the debt service on city bonds to be used for public facilities. In the same period it does not show an increase in the tax rate. It does show a substantial increase in the valuation of real property in the city of Boston. At the same time it also indicates that the funds available from federal and state sources are declining. A lot of people around the room pay a lot of taxes on real property. I suppose the question is, isthere a possibility of using revenue sharing monies or some other sources of money to help pay for that instead of going back progressively to the property tax and looking for an increase in the valuation of it? Maybe this is more directly a question for Jim Young.

Bob: I think it's a combination of both Alex and Jim Young. I don't see us spending that kind of money, certainly not by 1977. If we spend, well we're presently embarking on building 8 schools which is going to be somewhat over $100 M, I wouldn't see us by 1977 spending $200M. If we could get the proper return maybe we could crank that kind of money into it but that is not among current, realistic plans.

Speaker: Do these go beyond your immediate three year plan? Drawing from the ten year program that you submitted to the city council in February, they call for what you are doing this year multiplied by approximately 3X. To correct one thing you said that we're anticipating that a substantial part of this will be funded by federal and state government. For example, 1/2 the program is in schools and the state will pick up 65% of that. There are assumptions that the state will pick up some other programs, not to the same extent and that federal government will pick up some programs. If not through revenue sharing then through categorical grants. We're projecting that some programs in the future will be funded, through this sort of aid.

Bob: Alex, I assume that these figures are talking about financing the local share, not financing the whole thing.

Alex: That's right. I was going to make that point. That's all the front money and when we get reimbursed, for instance on schools by the state, they reimburse us on an annual basis for 20 years, but we put up the front money.

Bob: Right I understand that, but at some point there has to be a local share that has to be financed. According to the paper it's done through bond issues of the city's credit. The paper shows right here 1/2 billion dollars of new borrowing to finance Boston's public facilities.

Speaker: The new borrowing includessome of the monies that will be reimbursed. This happens to be the way in which the school program is financed. The city has to lay out all of the money and then it is repaid. So the $1/2 billion includes not only what the city must pay directly but also what we will be paid back in part.

Jim: Let me throw in my disclaimer here. I told Alex before we sat down that I would have to be prepared not to accept responsibility for the figures beyond the next couple of years. The figures that we're actively working with are the 2-3 year program that Bob described before and the debt service requirements on that as tied in with a program of similar length in terms of the objective of keeping the tax rate fairly stabilized.

Speaker: Therefore to get the increase in dollars the valuations must go up. That's what your charts show Jim.

Jim: No, I'm talking in a 2-3 year period. I think beyond that, as Bob pointed out is the long term program is in some respects speculative and is a framework for discussion.

Speaker: Well, in the long term program, we are anticipating that with all of the block scale private investing that is underway now, that we also forsee for the future, that the level of taxable property values will rise, so that with the same tax rate it will be an increased revenue yield.

Jim: Oh, well I think that everybody understands that, you can raise one or the other or both and it all comes evenly in dollars. I'm sitting here beside the city's largest tax payer and he's remaining very silent, but I know that the last column on the right which is the net debt service which shows as doubling in the next four years, is a concern not only to him but to a lot of other people. If what this paper indicates is not what the P.F.D. is planning, I think it would change the way a lot of us do our own capital planning. The private sector we know, in many respects follow the public sector's investments in locational and other aspects. If the debt service attributable to the public facility's net debt services is not to be doubled then maybe the public facilities expansion isn't as ambitious.

Bob: I think that my course of action is right directly between these two gentlemen. Jim is watching the tax rate very carefully and telling me what is available and Alex is saying that there are bigger and better things coming, there will be more tax revenue. I think that there is a balance here.IfWhat Alex says is going to happen, happens. Jim has more money and I go ahead and do it.

Speaker: Just to add to this though, out of the debt service increase that we project over the years is a rise of 50% and this will occur in part, not only because of new things that enter the picture in the future, but of the things that we've done in the past five years.

Speaker: Bob, can I switch off - you're talking about things in the future. Some of us have been interested in the South Station and Mr. Kenny and others hopefully think that this is going to be done on the private scale of say the area of the parking garage and so forth. Have you made any projections for the P.F.D. to be building down there and what this would take in terms of overall costs say of the transportation center, the railroad or anything like that?

Bob: No, I have not.

Speaker: But yet, if the private sector doesn't do it how do we really move ahead down there in the South Station unless we have those absolutely key areas?

Bob: Now you have to make an evaluation of it whether the public money should go into it. What's the payoff? What's the return?

Speaker: Yet, we're talking about putting a hotel down there and other private investments, and unless we have some facilities besides the transportation it sure as hell isn't going to get very far. I was hoping that the P.F.D. would make some projections because they may have to build this area up.

Bob: We haven't been asked to as yet, but we would certainly do so if asked to. Again I think that the final decision will be at judgement time.

Speaker: I'm impressed with the quality of the Capital Improvement plan but it's curious to me how the building of buildings can improve the quality of life, specifically in the black community. The building of the new police station is viewed with mixed emotions. You're talking about tearing down abandoned homes, but you don't speak of helping the remaining houses in that neighborhood of somehow improving their conditions. Thirdly, the city recreational areas which are vitally important to the quality of life in urban areas, have sort of been left out. I'm curious how you hope to get the people input into your Capital Improvement Program and make it realize what it can mean.

Bob: Number one the community school program is our main thrust on the recreational program, and on the recreational facilities.

Speaker: For instance the community schools program brings into the community lots of money but they don't look at the existing community facilities there and bolster them up. So, they come out competing against existing community facilities, and of course the newer ones are going to take over the old. This sort of thing seems to be

no people input involved in your capital improvement program.

Bob: That's been a problem, a personal one for me. When we build the new facility the intent usually is that we willphase out one of the older ones that's less efficient, not as good and more expensive to maintain. I found it's difficult to ever take anything away from anybody. Even an old school, once it's abandoned, community groups seem to want to use it for some purpose or another on occasions, and I've had to tear them down and have become very unpopular. But if the community school program that we've set up isn't satifsying the needs of the community, I very honestly don't know what will in the line of the recreation. I think it's just the finest program that's ever been attempted throughout the country, and great facilities. We're fortunate that we get the state to participate in the construction, and I can't think of anything else we would do in the line of recreation.

Speaker: What about parks?

Bob: We have created a number of new parks. We have put major money with federal help in restoring a lot of parks, and we have a parks commissioner who is absolutly adement that he're going to make his maintenance people work and maintain them. I think we're seeing signs of that. I just don't know what else we can do in that area. One problem is vandelism. We've had some thoughts that maybe we'd try. Out in California they put trailers in the middle of the parks, and have a family live in the trailer to keep an eye on things.

Speaker: I guess what I'm trying to get at is what mechanism or structure do you have for getting input, besides all the economics?

Bob: We're going to the communities with these maps, and we'll make presentations telling them what it's all about - how we formulate programs, try to give them the impact of the monies, how much is available, what we might do from it, and really seek out what they want to do. We maintain constant contact with the little city hall managers who corresponds to this exact district, and he checks around and trys to get all the input from the various associations.

Speaker: Last week I had the pleasure of going up to Mattapan to see the Association for Better Living, an organization which has a grand plan for Blue Hill Avenue and adjacent streets. They see the areas that are detoriting, yet one at this stage could be very well saved, which fits your description of many of the streets which have decent housing that's beginning to go down because of the abandoned housing. The selective pruning idea seems to tie in nicely with the urban dynamics idea of reducing housing stock, when it becomes unsavable. You seem to feel you didn't know if you were going to be able to get into this area, and I was wondering does this have to be a city ordiance and then secondly, if you do, in line with your question if in picking your areas where you commence action you try to look for those areas where there is an active community interest, where a well organized community group was already hoping to do soemthing along these lines so you could gain from the momentum and they could gain from your benefits. It seems to me they're hoping to do alot of rehabilitation but also there will be extensive needs for selective pruning. The idea of converting an abandoned lot into something that could be jointly owned by people on either side would be very appealing for that area.

Bob: Okay, to answer your first question, there's an ordiance that's being sent by the Mayor to the city council which would transfer the property section of the real property department to my department. If that ordiance is passed, then I would be into the thing pretty much full scale. If it's not passed I'm only into it on a very minor basis, I could only handle those properities that we would be using for a public purpose which would be a very small percentage. The second part of your question yes, we would be most anxious to use any inputs that are presently there by any community groups, which we do on most anything we do. The problem we have with that is sometimes we have a hard time with some community groups to make them face reality. When something can't be done it should be recognized and perhaps torn down if necessary. I would expect that many groups will want to save a lot of buildings that we probably just won't have a program that will allow us to do it. I think maybe the waiting out, the pruning out will be popular. I hope it would bem but we will certainly meet with any and all interested groups to discuss the program. We would

like to get a pilot off the ground real quick to see if it makes sense.

Speaker: So while they're in the process of lining up resources to help their five year plan they should know as soon as possible.

Bob: This is really conceptual, I don't like to go out and present false hopes.

Lou: Do you feel that the program that you've outlined and the difficulities that you have would be easier to implement or better off for people if over the next ten years the population of the city declined further, or increased? Do you make population projections?

Bob: I think in many of the areas the living conditions are simply toodense, and I think it would be for the improvement of the city if it were some of the more marginal houses were torn out and we had greater open areas of and less density. An interesting statistic is that Boston's the 16th largest city and we're number four in the availability of low income housing units, which seems to be out of proportion. So I don't know how you do it socially or whether it's the right thing to do.

Speaker: In other words we have a high ratio in terms of low housing units to total housing we rank fourth in the country.

Speaker: It all ties in with the number of people you have in public housing.

Speaker: Could I ask Jim Young a question? Where do we stand on the debt limit of the city. Does this bother you that we're approaching it, what do we have to do?

Jim: I think our debt limit situation is going to be taken care of by substantial increase in declause evaluation. According to the number that we've run, we don't run any risk of bumping against the present limit for at least the next couple of years, and by that time the debt limit being 5% of equalized. I think we're faced with a great increase in equalized valuation so the debt limit will not be a factor in the forseeable future.

Speaker: I hope you're wrong Jim, about the amount of equal evaluation increasing substantially if the state tax commission settled the increase because if that were the case and getting our debt limit increase is a benefit, but the loss of chapter 78 and the demension of $25M is a hell of a thing to pay for an increase debt limit.

Jim: They've increased, true, we're argued that the equalized shoudl remain low. I understand that the equalized valuation is gone up around the state to the extent that we do not exceed the state incerase of course. We're held harmless in terms of chapter 70 distribution.

Speaker: Well the city's figure for the state tax commission shows an increase of 120% and the state total only increases about 60%.

Dick Wall: We could still go up in access valuation up to about 3.2 to 3.3 billion and be at the same level as the overall state increase.

Speaker: You just substitute those figures that the state tax commission just reported into that chapter 70 formular for the 1970 current distribution.

Dick: But they were pushing up to 4.6 billion. I'm saying we could go up from the current 2.3 billion to 3.2 or 3.3 we can get that from the tax court and still not loose anything on chapter 70.

Speaker: That assumes that the total state, that the other communities who went up substantially will not appeal also and will not...

Dick: No, that takes into account their appeals, and assumes that they would get proportionatly reductions.

Bob: That's quite a jump, Dick, to go from 2.1 to 3.2.

Dick: Right, but what counts is not how much ours goes up but how much oursgoes up in relation to how much the overall stink value goes up, and that's gone up 65%. Now if we appeal, and the other communities appeal, and get reductions and the overall state valuation is say 50%, then we can go up to 3.2 or 3.3 and be alright.

Speaker: One other thing, that debt limit figure anyway is not really as important as alot of people believe, because you can borrow outside the debt limit. All you have to do is get a state authorization and you borrow outside the debt limit so the fact that you've reached the limit on borrowing for purposes within the debt limit.

Hank: I'm concerned, and I don't know who to ask it to, what is the validity of this document that we have? Is it a thing that we have an awful lot of information or is it something we're going to put in the draw. Is this something we should keep

and regard as a valid thing, should it be revised? Do we throw it away before anybody else reads it. How would you suggest we regard it?
Alex: This is a preliminary document, that we think is sueful from an information viewpoint. It presents the city's 10 year program which was presented by the public facilities commission to the city council in February, and presents this program in light of how it relates to the city's economy, how it relates to fiscal policy, how it relates to neighborhood improvement to the strategy for revitilization and how it will be financed. We thought it would be neglect of us to have presented the program without attempting to put down some of the numbers even though they might be hyperthcorical of how this ten year program might be financed. The significant thing is the numbers are illustrative, and the program is feasible and financally reasonable to the sense that it's a program that can be financed under the city policy of stabilization of the tax rate, and it's feasible because it's based on a strategy of achieve a very ambious public improvement effort. By expanding a relative share of capital outlayes to occur in operating expenditures and by taking into account the expansion in the tax property base that we have reason to believe has a potential for occuring over the next ten years. The major share of what we now pay in the way of debt service cost are based on past expenditures, when we add to this the new expenditures we get the projected 50% increase in debt service costs. But as we illustrate in the analysis,,and in the table the increase in that debt service cost will actually mean no significant in net debt service cost as a percentage of total municipal expenditures because over this period persumbly cities economy will be growing and the cities expenditures even if they just maintain their historical relationship to total income generated will also be growing, and that relation to this, the debt service cost increase will be modest. It will not by itself require any increase in the tax rate. That's the purpose of the numbers. They are illustrative but can have significance to us.
Dick: What Alex has shown is a logical extension of what we've done so far, since this administration began, and what we have planned in the next couple of years. I would like to find out in reference to the questions earlier that this does show the net service doubling between 1973 and 1977, but that same table also that the net debt service doubled from 1967 to 1973. That doubling of net service in that period of time it was not because the tax rate increases in that time period, the assussed valuation in that time period increased more than enough to offset the increase in the debt service and that debt service which averaged $3M a year during that time period. that the current tax rates which if were aware would have been able to level off recently current tax rate simple 2% annual growth and assessed valuation was in itself an additional $6M worth of revenue, and in the last six years we're only averaged $3M increase in the debt service. The big factor in our increase in tax rates in the 6 years has been very definatly wage increases for city employees and that is a direct result of the highly inflationary trend in the economy since then, as well as the newly established stronger position of the unions. I'm not as optimistic as Alex in the projecting of the impact of the economic growth of the city on our assessed valuation. I don't think the growth will let us finance this capital program that he's projecting ahead for the next 10 years without that program having a significant effect on the city's tax rate. In order for the city to carry out that kind of capital improvement program, the city will need tax reform. I don't think that's very far away.
Speaker: The paper is something that's useful for future reference.
Hank: Our next meeting will be May 16, when we perhaps will get even more technical in terms of tax and fiscal policy, both state, city and private inter relationships. Thank you all for coming.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee, Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program May 16, 1974

Tax and Fiscal Policy State, City and Private Sector

Hank Emerson: Today we are continuing with more or less the dollars and cents part of the city plan. I'll let Alex introduce our speaker today, and hope you enjoy the discussion today.

Alex Ganz:Jim Young could not be with us today, but we do have other good city people who can tell us about city tax strategy. David Strohm of the Mayor's policy staff will present some of the basic notions and ideas behind the city's tax strategy. In addition to David we have Dick Wall, the city budget director, also Don Gordon and Susan Houston and others.

David Strohm: I'm not going to talk in depth about Alex's report, because I'm assuming you've all read it. I really want to kick this discussion into broader realm. I think what emerges from Alex's report is a two headed monster, and we should keep this in mind all the way through our discussion of taxes and property in Boston.

As the numbers show the exempt property burden is a tremendous limitation on the Boston economy. But what makes this burden truly intolerable to the city is it is compounded by Boston and the rest of Massachusetts by over reliance on the property tas as a revenue device. I'd like to take a minute to talk about the implications of property tax and the reliance of this state on the property tax for land use and economic development for the entire pattern of growth for the state.

If there's a common characteristic among the cities and towns in Massachusetts especially the older ciites it is a trend toward decline in the downtown commercial and their immediately surrounding neighborhoods. Most of these towns in turn are surrounded by a ring of relatively strong growing suburban areas but the pattern is towards deterioration of the core areas. This is not unique to Massachusetts, but I think that you will find across the country that Massachusetts will probably be ahead to other states in this pattern of deterioration. Now a heavy property tax burden has a subtle but undeniable influence on growth patterns. Much of the pattern of growth in this state we have seen over the last 20-50 years is directly attributable to the fact that we are relying so heavily on property tax. Let me elaborate. When a firm is making a locational decision in terms of either reinvestment or new investment tax is a major variable in that decision. It's not the only variable but I think it's important, especially in Massachusetts where the property tax is very high. It's often much cheaper for an investor to locate in a jurisdiction where there is no cost of government support, no school, no police, no fire.

Over the long run, this is a narrow minded decision. Most of the cities in the commonwealth are old, there are infra structures which are aging and expensive. In many cases this infra structure includes the cost of supporting the large population, and that's not going to go away. Historically, these costs of infra structure have induced new development to go outside the city, they've induced development and reinvestment to leave the city. But with the flight of the investment dollar to the suburbs with growth patterns occuring in the suburbs, what we're finding is a burgeoning suburban municipal infra structure with many of the same problems that the central cities in Massachusetts have experienced for many years. Sooner of later most of these infra strucutre costs the schools, the police, the fire protection are going to catch up with the people who fled the city. I think you can see this now, you can see a narrowing differential in the cost of supporting services in the cities and the surrounding suburbs.

Property Tax Reform or land use controls

Right now in terms of the property tax we're at cross roads in Massachusetts and for that matter throughout the country. There's a very quite revolution under way. It's one that not too many people see. That revolution is really the stampede of subruban and exurban jurisdictions to adopt very strict, no growth policies. One of the greatest demands for planners right now is to devise ways of preventing growth in the suburban and exurban jurisdictions in most states in the country. These communities are discovering that except for some very limited forms of development and new investment, growth just doesn't pay. Any selectman in just about any town in Massachusetts will tell you that new housing development with more than two bedrooms is a net tax loser. They won't want more housing if more than two kids are involved. We can say the same thing about the city.

In Washington as well there is serious talk for the first time of national land use control. The bill almost made it through this year and it's likely to next year. A lot of folks find this rather frightening because it really implies government intervention in just about every private investment decision. I think it's probably unnecessary. In terms of actually controlling patterns of growth there is a much more efficient and direct way of doing that by addressing the tax structure. I think in this case you have a very clear example of tax strucutre, having a very serious impact on growth patterns - gorwth patterns that are really being looked upon as undesirable. Before we find ourselves forced into that kind of land use control, which is going to be a very heavy political fight, and it's going to be a long one, we have to remove that tax incentive to suburban sprawl, that's a characteristic of this and other states. Rather than watch downtown Lynn fall apart at the seams at great public cost to clean up what is left behind, we ought to try to remove the property tax discentive to keeping development concentrated and rational.

I wanted to introduce this consideration for discussion, not so much as the leading reason why we have to talk about addressing the entire tax structure in the state - I think that Alex has outlined the case for an equity argument - but from my concern about how we build a political coalition to get that kind of tax reform. What I'm suggesting to you is that there are out in the suburbs, people who want to see more rational growth patterns. There are at the same time people who want to see property tax reform for equity reasons. I think there is room now - as there's never been before - for a coalition of people with those interests. One of the best ways to satisfy both interests is to look more specifically at the kind of misuse of property taxes that Alex has talked about in the papers we have read for today.

Lou Alfeld: I did not write a paper on the particular subject of taxes because it's a very complex issue and not necessarily that well addressed by the urban dynamics model. I once did a paper on what is the best way to use the property tax to improve the city. So I'd like to address my issues not in terms of the city and proper tax but to the larger system, as you pointed out. It seems to me looking at the issue of taxes and spending from a systems viewpoint, we might begin by just looking at the system as being the state of Massachusetts. Within the state there is a total amount of spending at goes on by state and local government and a total in tax collections. Some of what is in Alex's paper discussed ways of shifting the point of collection of those taxes. The way you collect the taxes does effect the patterns of growth, it does impact some municipalities harder than others, and the property tax seems to have hurt Boston in the past. But shifting the point of collection of the total amount of take in the state does not necessarily reduce the flow tax burden in the state. The real key to the systems method of analysis has got to look at two sides of the figure. Where exactly is that money being spent to get the best return on the investment. We need to make sure that by shifting around the point of collection we are not unwittingly creating a kind of run away spending collection situation that can very easily come about.

I'll give you an example - whenever the control over spending is in the same jurisdiction as control over raising the income you can not really spend a great deal more than your income. There is a very real cut off point, you begin to feel immediate pressures when you start spending beyond that limit. There's a limit to how much in debt you can really go. As you shift control of the spending, one person does the spending and somebody else worries about raising the money, it winds up that the disparity between spending and income can get much larger. The argument has been raised that this is true in municipal finance as well, when municipalities have the power to spend money but the burden of raising the money is shifted somewhere else, then the acountability for spending becomes lessened. The natural tendency of the system is to spend more, because the only way one municipality can beat it is to spend as much as they possibility can, therefore they come out better off than the next municipality. This is certainly true at the national government level. If you look at how the federal government funds a lot of projects, they gave a lot of money but gave the control over spending to the states and cities. The only way states and cities came out ahead on that game was to spend as much as they possibly could, which meant that the federal government had to raise more and more money to pay off things that were not necessarily in the federal government's interest.

Now, within the state of Massachusetts we just want to be careful in analyzing tax structure that we wind up with some kind of accountability at the spending point so that the people responsible for raising the money do not have to go beyond the limit of the state. The transfer in late 1960's of the welfare payments may be an example of this. Once the burden of paying welfare costs was shifted from a local municipality to the state. There no longer was pressure in a local municipality to worry about how many welfare families there were, or to really put in pressures to keep the number down. This has happened in New York City too. By releasing those pressures alittle bit we may be tending to concentrate more welfare families in a particular city because the bill is being picked up somewhere else in the system. Welfare payments in this state certainly have not gone down as a result of shifting, nor have the expenditures of local government gone down because the state has picked up the tab.

Urban Dynamics Theory of Aging

The one thing that I found missing in the paper was a look at the slightly larger system from the point of view of the state itself, and where the money comes from. For those of you who are familiar with the urban dynamics model, I'll just take a moment to highlight one example to make the point. Urban dynamics is a theory of the life cycle of a city. It talks about how it grows initially and then reaches a period of decline, when everything gets old, when the land is filled up, all the prime sites are gone, new construction comes only at the point of demolishing something else, population density is very high, it becomes difficult to achieve the kind of growth you once had in youth. Well that model in a very broad sense applies to Massachusetts and applies to New England. This whole area of the country was the first area settled, almost all of its land is under either plow, asphalt, or buildings somewhere, prime sites are harder and harder to get, transportation and availability and everything, we live in an older part of the country. All of New England in a sense and particularly Massachusetts exhibits many of the characteristics of the urban dynamics model going throigh that phase of transition from peaking into sort of a decline. Statistics have shown that the population in Massachusetts is already one and a half times the density of that of India. We are one of the most densely populated regions in the country. And yet as the structure and everything we've built over the last 200 years have aged, have become less and less efficient, all the new growth has gone somewhere else in the country. The rest of the 3/4 of the U.S. are the suburbs of New England. New England is kind of the inner city of the country, with all of the problems of aging structures, and people without enough income, and enough skills, and the money, the more affluent both in corporations and people have moved to the suburbs. Now what we want to do in terms of fiscal policy is to look very closely at this phenoenon. Does the theory that I've just outlined have any validity? And if so, how can fiscal policies for not only the state but cities and the state do something to reverse that trend or at least to save the state from going further under.

I noticed in the paper that great reliance is placed on property tax in terms of creating some of the problems and one reference was to St. Louis which only has 19% of its total revenue come from property tax. I grew up and went to college in St. Louis and am quite familiar with the city. St. Louis is by no means a boom town and hasn't been for quite some time in spite of the fact that it has a very low property tax rate. All of the new construction in St. Louis during the 60's occured in a place called Clayton, which was a suburb just on the outside of the boundries of St. Louis.

The reason for this didn't have to do with the property tax but had a great deal to do with land accessibility; where people lived; how difficult it was to reuse land; and a lot of other reasons. As you pointed out there are many more things to the system besides property tax. I will not miminize the importance of looking at the issue, and I think we ought really to look at it because it does have some very real impact on the distribution of how taxes come and where you want to control growth and where you want to encourage growth, but we ought not to loose sight of the larger system and realize that by tinkering with the fine controls we ought not to miss the fact that the entire state and region itself needs help.

Dick Wall: I will have to totally reject the idea that tax reform which reduces the reliance of the municipal governments on the property tax,and makes available to local government other major sources of revenue (to reduce the kind of discentive of the property tax on property development that Dave Strohm refered to) is going to reduce the accountability of the local government for their spending. That accountability is still going to remain just as much as it is, in existence now. We are accountable to elected officials who run the city government, and to the public through a variety of mechanisms. In no way would reform create a situation where we would be spending money without controls on the amounts of revenue we would be getting. I'm sure there's not going to be any valhalla in which the state would give the city government an unlimited amount of revenue from tax sources available to the state government. We are still going to be very limited. There will still be a very definite limit on how much revenue will be available to the city and that's what will have to govern our expenditure levels.

There will be no meaningful seperation between the income and the outgo. Budgeting is still going to be a matter of determining what out needs are and determining what revenues are available and try to bring those two total figures together and allocate those resources in as efficient and as effective manner as we can - regardless of whether the source of revenue is a property tax levied directly by the city government, a broader tax levied by the state government.

A Wage Tax Alternative

If there is any real great concern that the city might get irresponsible in its expenditures if it is not raising, levying and collecting the tax itself, there's a very simple solution. We'd be very happy to levy a wage tax on everybody who works in the city of Boston. Any time you people want to persuade the state government to permit us to do that, it would be an ideal solution. Then there would be no separation at all between the levying and the expenditure of tax money by the city government. But so far with the state legislature very heavily representing suburban and exurban areas of the state nothing like this has happened. Since the Governor's from Dover there's very little likelihood that the city of Boston will be given the power to levy a wage tax. The two cities I worked in before I came here both had a wage tax, Cincinnati and Philadelphia.

Lou Alfeld: I sat through two meetings last week, and there is a big difference in voting on items that the state or the federal government going to pay for and the items the town's going to pay for. We voted for state improvement of roads and we voted down things that were going to add to our property tax dollar. There is a greater incentive to spend money. I merely talked about pressures in the system, not the fact that the state couldn't put more pressures on to stop that funding.

David Strohm: I'm going to take Dick's argument one step further and say that the system that we have right now is quite the opposite of accountability. What we're talking about in these two research papers is the system in which the legislature is mandating the spending, and you can call it spending just as easily as you can call it exemption. The legislature is not accoutable for that spending. We're really talking about bringing into effect a system which has more accountability than the current syste

Lou Alfeld: I think everyone would agree that we don't have that much accountability presently.

Ed Moscovitch: I have the perspective of sitting in the seat of having to find the state money for our share of all the open ended grant programs we have in the cities and towns. I can tell you spending's been going up under such programs as reimbursement for school construction, transportation of pupils, regional schools and vocational schools by about 20% a year for the last 3 or 4 years. Indeed the Governor's budget had a $100,000,000 increase for reimbursements to cities and towns and the interesting thing about that increase it was half of all the new general fund money that we had. It didn't give anybody any reduction in property tax because every dollar of it, with one exception which I'll come to, was just reimbursement for spending.

A New Aid Formula

I must say that despite that apparent confirmation of Mr. Alfeld's theory, I think that in a way he's quite wrong. The way we do it now we say if you build a school we'll pay 65%, and so school construction is going up about 15-20% per year even though everybody knows that there aren't going to be anymore students 20 years from now than there are now. We say if you build a regional school, you get a bonus of 15% of your chapter 70 money, and so cities and towns have been building regional schools all over the Commonwealth. However, I think you can easily design the system so the marginal dollar still comes from the local city and town, and I think that Boston and the other central cities of the state ought to have more money and we can do that without having these incentives to spend by simply saying the formula shall be based on need not based on expenditure so that the city gets what its going to get. Beyond that if it wants to spend anything more, it is 100% of its own cost as long as the marginal dollar is 100% local dollar I don't see any reason why we can't get more state aid.

I might say though that the big problem of course is coming up with the money. It's much easier for all of you than for me to endorse plans for great increases and state money. I just think that people in the Commonwealth are persuaded that if we raise state taxes we're going to raise state taxes and it won't save local money. The idea of raising the income tax of the sales tax to help local cities and towns has a black eye. I don't know any political figure who thinks he can sell that idea. It's right on mertis but I must say I think it's politically dead. I regret that but it's going to take a major job selling job on somebody's part to get the kind of money that would make a difference. Also, it's sort of a depressing thought: local cities' and towns' expenditures go up about $400,000,000 a year; so if you had a 50% increase in the income tax then for one year there would be no increase in local tax rates, and then they would go on increasing at the same rate they've gone up in the past.

Statewide Industrial Property Tax

About a year ago Lynn and I worked on a couple of projects to see whether state wide property tax on industry would look like. Precisely because of what Alex is talking about it would end the incentive to move to the suburbs for industry. The problem is that by and large the central cities make a lot of money off the local property tax on industry. If you have a state wide property tax on industry then they probably would get less money than they have now. The marginal incentives would be improved but at some expense to the city treasury.

David Strohm: That depends on state reimburements.

Ed Moscovitch: I'm saying holding everything constant, if you take the same amount of revenue and say can we help Boston by levying a state wide property tax on industry and then return all the money we levied back to cities and towns. The property tax would be the same in Boston as it would be in Milton. There would be no property tax reason for leaving Boston. That's true, but how do we get you back all the money you were getting before.

David Strohm: By constructing the redistribution...

Ed Moscovitch: Well, we've dealt with a lot of formulas and we have trouble coming up with one that gave you as high a percentage of the money as you're already collecting.

David Strohm: And we haven't seen one in five years either.

Ollie Oldman: Ed what you're suggesting is the state wide property tax would be at a lower rate on Boston property than Boston's property tax therefore less money would come back to Boston, and of course that's true.

Ed Moscovitch: No, you're assuming that the formula would be reimbursement for just the amount of money that was raised in your town. Suppose you have a reimbursement

rate that has nothing to do with it. I'm saying the cities already collect such a high percentage of the total property tax collected from industry that's its hard to come up with any kind of equiable formula, that would give it back to them.

We did come up with a formula that put Boston around the same spot but there are a surprising number of towns that are very severly hurt. There's no way you can help towns like Everett and Burlington. In any one of that type of plan you do get towns that will be severly penealised. I think industry has its advantages but there are also a lot of costs to having industry. I don't know Everett that well but perhaps they deserve to get the relatively low tax because they are putting up with the existance of a lot of relatively unpleasent industry. There are costs to having industry in your town and I think in some way you don't want any statewide that's going to eleminate that fact.

Maybe there reasons that more industry is leaving big cities there are greater costs in terms of resources or an industry locating in Boston. There are construction costs, and things of that nature, that industry should be aware of that. Perhaps we want to have those incentives to locate in those particular places, if in terms of resources it's cheaper to locate in Burlington perhpas the industry should locate in Burlington. When you think in terms of a systems type analysis of the state as a whole.

David Strohm: That's exactly what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to suggest that it's cheaper in Burlington because you're abondoning the infra structure in Boston. The tax payers in Boston sooner or later are going to have to pay for it to clean up and redevelop. Sooner or later the people in Burlington pay, and that the overall impact is a very rational land use pattern and growth pattern.

Speaker: I'm not convinced that it necessarily irrational even over the long term for Burlington to have industry. It may always be cheaper.

David Strohm: What I'm trying to do is respond th Ed's concern that's it hard to find a political position in terms of tax reform that has statewide appeal. I'm suggesting that the concern statewide, citywide, nationwide for more rational land use and growth policy holds the germ of an idea for a property tax reform coalition,

Ed Moscovitch: I just want to come back to the point about the expenditure powers the state has. One of the disadvantages of framing it from the city and town point of view is the only way to get more money is to spend more money. I'm hopeful that we could redesign those formulas so that the amount of money that the town gets would be based on its needs, somehow measured, not on its expenditure. This will not only would solve the problem of cities and towns spending without worrying where the money comes from but it would offer a Mayor the choice of holding his expenditure under control, taking the increased state aid that would come about and lower his property taxes.

I might say that every spending program has a lobby, and what we would be up against is the teachers lobby, the regional school lobby, the vocational school lobby, and so on. A lot of people out there like the idea of state programs that only raise money if the towns spend..

City Property Tax Concessions

Ollie Oldman: It seems to me the focus of this whole discussion has gone away from what I thought we were talking about today. It looks as if almost everybody is passing the buck on to the state with respect to solving the cities' problems. Then you force the state to defend some of its practices. It would seem to me that a proper focus for today's discussion would have been more like: given the city's problems, structure and powers, what can it do and what can't it do? One of the things that just keep getting buried, essentially because attention is focused on different problems, is the growing problem of the property tax concessions. When is the city going to face up to the fact that it's time to do something about this? And how much its costing the city? And whether or not the growth policy that's implied in size of concession really is in the city's interest in some larger sense?

The question of sewer charges or other kinds of service charges are briefly mentioned in the Boston tax strategy paper. But as a whole is is buried under the rubrick that's it's "too complex" to deal with. Instead, what we have is a proposal which largely again would pass the buck to the state in terms of doing something about

eimburseing the city for 20% of its tax on exempt property. And again there's othing in anything that I've seen here or heard here today that would indicate that he city bears any responsibility for doing anything with respect to solving its wn problems.

There are several problems that are really of burning importance. The fiscal isparity for the tax inequities that exist within the city from one region of the ity to another, from one type of property to another is something that has to be aced up to by the city. It can't just be buried under the rubrick that the state ill solve our problems somehow or other if we bang at the door hard enough. It as to be identified, brought out into the open.

The Cost of Services to High Rise

A study was in the Globe yesterday that Joe Barresi and his group came out with n the cost to the city of high rise buildings. From what the newspaper said you ould think that high rise construction in Boston was thre greatest thing that ever it town. But I would suppose that if such a study was examined with great care and n allocation of cost to these buildings was done by various other groups you would ome up with a great deal of disagreement as to whether or not high rise, and especially ew high rise property, pays its own way. I'd be very skeptical about any of the igures I read in the paper.

Nevertheless those are the only things that get out, and the city ought to be doing something whether or not those figures are really defendable on a basis of any rational or any other basis of the city's expenses cost relative to the revenues those properties are producing. We're not getting that kind of feed back. There is one point about the exemption area that the city might take the lead on, but again it has to face up to the political necessity that all of these things will be politically unpopular. One simple thing New York has recently done - they got the state legislature to change the property tax exemption law, so the bar associations, medical associations, the Explorers Club and all kinds of other such institutions are no longer exempt from the property tax in New York City. While it's true it only accounts for 10-12% of the exempt property, these kinds of things would seem to be the sort of things where the city can get some marginal dollars, that are likely to be a very useful dollars, and aren't likely to have any important impact on exempt institutions, the economy or anything else. The notion that you can expect the state to give 20% reimbursment of potential taxes on federal property and state property is just a way of passing the buck but the legislature will never buy it. While the state has a very important role vis a vi the financing of the city, Boston has a number of decisions to make. They shouldn't be made on the basis of some rigid formula such as 20% of the assessed value of exempt property.

Hank Emerson: We have several questions all at once. But we've had none from the private sector.

Joe Barresi: I just want to respond to Ollie's skepticism. I can assure Ollie that we didn't pre-ordain our conclusions. We were very careful in allocating the cost of services to various commercial areas. I'm sure that people can differ with the methodology that we used. We were quite objective, or as objective as we can be, and quite careful in allocating those municipal costs to the commercial districts and in measuring the real property tax revenues from those districts. I'll weigh our conclusions against the "seat of the pants" skepticism. Skpetics didn't raise the question, they dogmatically stated that high rise cost the city more to service then they produce in real property tax revenue. That's the reason we addressed that particular question, because people were stating that and were basing their conclusions on a study that was in San Francisco. We tried to address that particular question. With all due respect to Ollie I'm afriad that unless he can show me evidence to the contrary that I'll have to stand on the conclusions that our study produced.

What we did was to divide the city into several commercial areas of varying densities from high to low, and in the high density areas they had more of the buildings of course which are high rise and which people don't like, but they show that on a unit basis, high density areas cost less to service than the low density areas and if the revenue is produced on a unit basis had a relationship to density the highest density area didn't produce the most revenue on the unit basis but generally

the areas with the highest density which meant those with the newest commercial building produced more revenue on a unit than the others. The unit of measure was per thousand square feet.

We're subject to challenge and subject to question. Fine, that's one of the reasons for the study, but I'd like to have those challenges documented and not made from a top of the head basis as the statements were made originally in opposition to highrise.

Dun Gifford: It's been facinating to bat the ball back and forth. I think Prof. Oldman indicated that it's whos going to pay for it, as between the city and the state, or take responsibility for collecting and then paying. It always ends up that it's the homeowner and the fellow who owns real estate that pays the taxes. The taxes are going up dramatically when you aggregate them in terms of the total collections made. There is a fiction in Boston, which is going to catch up with this city sometime very soon, after the confusion about the 18 month transition passes. The fiction is the tax rate is staying stable and very close to its same rate and therefore the tax collections in Boston are not going up. That is fiction, the assessed valuation against which the tax rate is made is going up very steeply. So steeply in fact that the most recent tax bills which came out, about a dozen I know about are in violation of long standing agreements between the assessing department and property owners. That is ultimately going to catch up with the city, my own guess is that it will stimulate the long dreaded taxpayers suit to force the city of Boston in compliance with the state law on full valuation. Prof. Oldman has done a study of that, others have too. I think it would be illustrative and interesting for him to speak briefly, what he thinks or guesses would happen if the city of Boston were to have gone into compliance with the state law. I don't know if anybody could ever get an agrument on what would happen until it does happen. My guess is that what we're going through right now, there's a lot of confusion about the 18 month transition on fiscal year and on an attempt to keep a tax rate stable for extraneous reasons while the assessed valuation base is going up, is going to force the people who've given up trying to get abatements into the appelate tax court which won't be able to handle the load. I think we're coming to a bad period of time on the real estate property tax base on which the city of Boston gets most of its revenue.

Hank Emerson: Dun, when you mentioned assessments were going up. you were talking primarily about the commercial property.

Dun Gifford: No, look at the figures.

Hank Emerson: You two guys are really at odds on whether assessed valuation is going up.

Dick Wall: Assessed valuation has been increasing at an average rate over the last 10 years of about 2% a year. That does not sound to me like a sharp increase in valuation.

Hank Emerson: It sounds like it hasn't been keeping up with inflation.

Dick Wall: Heck no, that's one of the big problems in the property tax, it's inflexible, and does not keep up with inflation.

Dun Gifford: Nobody seems to be pushing hard for the kind of radical change that is needed and we still tinker with a lousy system. I think we all agree on that point.

Speaker: You can double the assessed valuation, bring it closer to market value and cut the property tax rate in half. The thing is your tax bill, when you pay it in dollars, still goes up every year. What kind of funny business goes on. Welfare - you take a look at some of the tables and papers you see the welfare payments run up steeply until the state took them over. They dropped down to $8,000,000 a year as opposed to over $100,000,000 a year for the city of Boston and the corresponding tax colletions, the city of Boston's expenditures went down but now they've gone back up again. There are very valid reasons for it, obvisouly but what irritates most of us who have to pay the taxes is to listen to the ping pong ball and watch it going back and forth: the city ought to do it; the state ought to do it. What we would hope with the very great amount of knowledge, and commitment, and experience is that ultimately all the experts would get together. Something has to be done because it's getting fouled up. I tell you that from the perspective of someone who talks to a lot of people who pay millions in taxes every year. We don't worry about collecting them, that's not our job.

Hank Emerson: Does anyone else from the private sector have any comments?

Bob Saltonstall: As I was listening to Prof. Oldman I couldn't help but think of the people sitting in the Mayor's office faced with various alternative ways of dealing with some of the means for offsetting the taxes lost through tax emempt property, and wondering whether at anytime they've attempted in the Mayor's office to establish a task force which would separate out from the three or four different directions that might be taken to start to chisel away at this probelm so sort of a priority order of how to go about it.

David Strohm: Let me speak to that for a minute because I've had partial responsibility for working on that strategy. We think we've looked at everything, and what we come back against is a long history of challenges in the legislature:to specific types of exemptions; to attempts to try to levy certain service charges on exempt property; to get a form of state reimbursement for exempt property even the state's own property. have drawn on the legislature as well as in the executive offices of the state government have been consistently negatives all the way down the line. For Mr. Oldman to say that there is a possibility of service charges on 2% of the institutions may well be. But let me go back to the question on equity and political responsibility, because I think that's very important to the whole issue. We did not establish those exemptions. We did not say: "you shall locate in Boston, you locate there tax free if you wish". That was a decision of the legislature. I do not feel it is incumbent upon the Mayor of Boston or upon the city of Boston to turn around and confiscate that status from those properties. When the Mayor of Boston, or the people of Boston did not in fact create that problem. And this is why we're saying it is very clearly a state responsibility.

There is a political question above and beyond the equity question. I think Alex's work has established the equity question that I'm talking about, I don't think there's any doubt about that, there may be some differences about the degree.

Boston's economy and state taxes

Alex Ganz: I'd like to address myself to the question of passing the buck to the state as well. One way of looking at the passing buck question is to look at Boston's growth and raising taxes. Actually Boston's economy has been expanding and it's been raising a rapidly rising level of tax revenue for the state, through the state collection of income taxes, both personal and corporate, on activity in Boston, and through sales tax collections. We estimate that Boston raises almost 1/3 of the state income and corporate tax, and some 16% of the state sales taxes. So Boston's generating lots of revenue. We'd like to have some of the kinds of systems that other large cities have for participatation in that revenue. Boston's rather unique in not having an income tax, a commuter tax, a payroll tax, a sales tax, which many cities have and which therefore are able to lock into an elastic system that rises with the economy. So I don't think that Boston can be accused of passing the buck at all, it's passing the bucks but not the buck.

On the question of alternative approaches, we're not bound to any one solution. In fact we've been suggesting several approahces. We're suggesting right not the payment in luie of property tax as lost through the exemption grant by the state. But we're also quite interested in other approaches. These include a city commuter tax, a city payroll tax, city income tax, city sales tax, state financing of certain kinds of activities. Some of the proposals of the Boston Urban Observatory we think merit consideration as do some of the proposals that came out under the master tax plan. We think some combination of these would provide the relief that Dun called for.

Joe Barresi: This Boston tax strategy is really no different from the strategy that John Hynes and John Collins had. It is probably better aticulated. There's no question in my mind that the state has taken action relatively recently to ease the burdens of cities and towns: as recently as 1966 with the sales tax enactment and as recently as 1968 with assumption of the welfare responsibility. Those require a lot of dollars and contrary to what some might say, the assumption of the welfare responsibility was not done with the cities' own money, as Kevin White realised back in Dec. of 1967 when he refused to relinquish the position of Secretary of State until Governor Volpe amended the bill that was in the legislature for assumption of welfare costs, to provide more money to pick up those costs. I don't buy the argument

that those costs were picked up with our own money. The income tax was amended to provide a considerable amount of money to finance the welfare takeover. So there has been action on the part of the state.

I support the strategy of the city in trying to get some reimbursement by the state for tax exempt property. I don't think it's going to be successful - but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to do it. I think that 20% figure I'm to blame for part of the because the 20% orignated from a formula that we helped to work out with the construction of the new Blue Cross building where a tax emempt entity is going to basis take about half the space on a condominium basis. We worked out an equitable tax arrangement. So that's where the 20% came from - I think the tax exempt property is overworked as an argument of a city problem because most of it is publically owned and regardless of the fact that Massport may own a lot of it a good part of the property that Massport now owns was tax exempt before Massport was born. Even if Massport and Logan Airport sunk into the Atlantic Ocean tomorrow the service costs of the city would not be altered.

I guess what I'm saying is maybe I've been around too long. I've heard this song for such a long time, its a strategy that has to be developed, it's a strategy that has to be persuded. I just feel kind of cynical and don't have too much optimism that it will prevail.

Taxing by the square foot

Lou Alfeld: I'd like to refer to a paper I did some time ago, not saying that this is an answer. We looked at the difference in biasing assessments between residential and business properities and between older and newer properties with the conclusion that the urban system can be expected to respond to differences in property tax burdens between residents and businesses in adjustments in wages and real income. Higher tax assessments against industry would reduce profit thereby tending to drive out industry. If you tax residents more it would tend to raise the cost of living thereby driving up wages and the effect of the higher wages would tend to drive out industries. The one formula that I came up with for the paper, looking under the constitution for a equitable way of assessing all property equally, was on a square foot basis. I'm throwing this out merely as a new way, and idea of looking at the system. If you tax all real property on the basis of so many cents per square foot of area, the system becomes biased against older deteriorating, less productive structures, and favors new construction, because the new stuff will be more productive. The assessment formula that I've built into this paper was that it would be implemented over a 20 year period. It starts out as a very small fraction of the property tax and you've got a 20-50 year period in which to switch to a new system. This is an idea of looking to a tax assessment formula or program that results not only in meeting current spending patterns but builds in the correct bias in the system that maintains a healthy long term equalibrium situation in terms of always being able to provide enough money, and having the built in incentives to renew and recreate the sources of wealth.

Hank Emerson: My only editorial comment is in terms of when we discuss the downtown plan we were told by the BRA that 47% of the city's tax has been paid by the structures in which we were talking about in terms of the downtown plan, primarly corporate strucutres. If that's true, this paper has not broken down, in terms of corporate real estate taxes vs. individuals. I think it's time to sort of reinforce what Dun said: it's time we get going here on understanding our taxes and doing something about them in this city. Apparently corporations are paying at least half, maybe more, of the real estate taxes in the city. So in the paper where we say the residents of the city of Boston are paying 11% of their income in real estate taxes, if corporations are paying at least half of those taxes, that means that residents are paying something in the order of 5. And the paper compares the 11% to Milton, where they don't have any industrial base. So in essence the paper is misleading and saying the Boston residents are over taxed. The paper should look at it from a corporate point of view.

Dan Holland: If you start to factor from the corporate point of view, who pays that burden that the corporations pay? I find it hard to envision a corporate entity per say bearing a tax burden. The compnay takes actions to transfer the tax to somebody, and some is exported but not 100%.

Hank Emerson: We've got to elimate this word probably and get together to talk in details. The sad thing about this meeting is we've got an academic, city hall and private sector groups, the private sector is not well informed and not well equiped to talk about it and I hope that through these dialogues that we've beginning to get into a posture where some of the private business men in this city will begin to be better informed so that we can participate. When we do have facts we all pretty much agree.

Ollie Oldman: Dun referred to a study in which Dan Holland and I have both participated which is not yet finished and therefore is not yet discussable. It will soon be released. Whe it is I hope it will be a focus of discussion with this group.

Walter Merrill: Is it a fair summary to say that all taxpayers are ultimately individuals. It's our thesis that those individuals who own property in Boston are over taxed, and that out tax strategy is to shift some of this tax to certain other individuals?

Hank Emerson: Well, as usual we've ended up with more questions than answers. Thank you for coming.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development For Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program May 30, 1974

Hank Emerson: You've received prior to this meeting an interim report on what has happened to the city's long range plan during the duration of our meetings and where that plan is right now. So, in a sense we're going back to focus on the Nov. 15 meeting, with revisions, updates and a look at whatever impact has occured from our meetings.

Alex Ganz: I thought that today would be a good time to talk about where we've come. We've been at this 6 months and a lot of things have happened. It may be useful for me to try to give an interim assessment of where Boston's plan stands. In retrospect, the only conclusion that I can come to is that we've made enormous progress.

The experience has been extraodinary at a number of levels: the public-private sector dialogue (as a footnote to that the inter-public sector dialogue that was something not scheduled but came about). We've done a lot of new work. Perhaps most important of all a lot has happened in the city. Just to mention a few things - where we are now and where we were not last November. Today we have Park Plaza and 60 State Street. Last Friday Moody's gave the city bonds an A rating. Last week the federal government gave the region $600,000,000 for the city's share of the public transit oriented transportation program. Yesterday Bob Kenney made the first public statement on the Bedford west project on Washington Street.

Now these are important events, but I submit that some of the things that we have been dealing with in terms of basic city policy strategy have perhaps been even more important, and this is what I'd like to talk about today - about the new work; about the public-private sector dialogue, the kind of questions raised by M.I.T. I'll talk about the improved, refined plan that Boston is shaping up. Just to focus the subject a little, Boston's plan deals with twin goals; the goal for expanding opportunities, to reinforce the growth of the city's economy, and the goal for revitalizing the city as a place to live. In pursuing these twin goals, we have been more conscious than ever of the need to balance the targets for jobs, population and housing.

Another focal point of Boston's plan at the heart of the plan is a ten year investment program. These are goals for public and private investment, some $12-15 billion. Fortunately, much of this is already under way. According to our latest surveys almost $7 million of public and private investment are already underway. Achieving these targets is important, and will do a good deal toward improving the city both as a place to work and a place to live. But $12 billion won't provide everything that we might need. I'll try to allude to the gaps and problems that will still remain. But this is something that we think is feasible, financeable, desirable and something that we can do.

Essentially what I will try to do is point to some of the highlights of the nuances that have emerged in the last 6 months. I'll focus on three aspects - the economy, the people and their neighborhoods, and fiscal strategy. With respect to the economy there are several new things. First, under the stimulis of the questions from Lou, and our public-private sector dialogue, we undertook a substantive, indepth review and analysis if the recent trends and prospects for Boston's economy. We reviewed the most recent data on Boston itself, as well as the most up to date prognosis for the national economy and that of the state and the metropolitan region. Speaking of the latter first, and we have some fairly new projections of the national economy and that of the state and metropolitan region, several important things emerged. First, the expectation is one of

continued growth relatively and absolutely in the services aspects of the national economy. These will grow more than the goods producing aspect and will increase their relative share. This is also the anticipation for the state and the metropolitan region. I refer specifically to projections of the U.S. government, the inter agency growth study project has published in the December, 1973 issue of Monthly Labor Review and also, related to that, some of the projections will be stated in the metropolitan region of the national planning association. One of the nuances in these projections is the expectation of growth in service activity, but the other nuance that's rather important is the prognosis of strong continued growth through the 1970's and a lesser rate of growth beginning in the 1980's, as our population, labor force and employment nationally declines in their rate of growth.

For the city, also some interesting things. The review confirmed the importance of the growth in transformation to the 60's. The new information also highlighted something that we had not been adequately aware of, the seriousness of the recession of 1970-71. In these years, Boston lost 15,000 jobs - 7,000 in manufacturing, and surprisingly 8,000 in federal government employment in the city of Boston. The most recent information suggests that the city is making a very strong recovery and we anticipate that jobs this year and next year, will be substantially higher than that prior to the recession. The evidence that we have for that is the very strong investment, public and private, that has been taking place this year and for the last two years - the office building boom. We anticipate strong growth in the second half of the 1970's for the city of Boston and following the national pattern a modestly reduced rate of growth beginning in 1980. The other important fact that emerged from this review and analysis, was the very difficult prospect for manufacturing - because manufacturing jobs are important to Boston to provide a ladder of opportunity for part of the labor force that can not yet take advantage of the growth in service activity.

Boston is pursuing important goals in creation and generation of manufacturing jobs dispite difficulties that national, state and metropolitan region forecasts suggest for manufacturing. I'll mention some of the things we're doing. The Job Center program of the EDIC: good prospects for industrial use of the Boston Navy Yard and creating industrial jobs in the Southwest corridor. We are working toward a goal of creating 5 to 10,000 new industrial jobs despite the difficulties that national and local trends seem to forecast. All this adds up to targets of growth of some 80,000 jobs in the next ten years and continued strong growth in office development, some 12 to 15,000,000 square feet. Revitalization of retail trade: we're looking forward to some 3,000,000 square feet of which we have projects in hand for a million and a half square feet. Continued important institutional development: the medical and education institutions, the transportation program that now seems to have in hand the bulk of its financing, as well as the strong role of city government and its public facilities program and state government too. One of the key aspects of the prospects for the economy centers in the downtown growth program which is now in a very advanced stage of preparations. This program is important, first of all, because it incorporates most of the job creation and activity, a target of some $3 1/2 billion of investment over a ten year period has evolved, of which some 2 1/2 billion is already underway. But the new thing that the downtown growth program introduced is a very important concept of deliniatior of conservation areas and control growth areas in addition to the development areas. In the control growth areas, one of the criteria is the protection of small industry and small activity and the jobs that they entail. This is very specifically dealt with in the downtown growth program and something new, something we didn't have last Nov. Other aspects of the economy are the special development areas, Boston Navy Yard, the Southwest Corridor, Columbia Point and of course we have important projects in the urban redevelopment program, Waterfront, South Station and Park Plaza. These add up to a good deal, and you can see there are important nuances that reflect the public-private sector dialogue, some good questions raised by M.I.T., and these things are pursed. And we'll pursue it through the mechanisms and its disposal, including the special tax treatment under construction. That's old, but it will continue. But it also includes the approach to tax reform that

we tried to discuss a few weeks ago. We think this is important, to relieve both private sector and residents of some of the property tax burdens that they bear, and this continues to be part of the city that we try to deal with. It includes completion of the urban renewal program, new ways of using zoning, planning. These are powerful tools and with your participation and help we hope to achieve some of these goals.

Now I'd like to address myself to how the city's approaching the issues of people and their neighborhoods. There's been enormous progress in the revitalization process and we have very strong evidence of it. First people are moving back to the city. This is important, this is new, this is a change from what happened between 1950 and 1970. Secondly, property values are rising in all neighborhoods, even the inner city neighborhoods,the latter for the first time in 20 years. These positive factors play an important role in the shaping of the program and strategy that I've described to you. In the last 6 months since we've become increasing sensitive to both the challenge, the opportunity and danger in the emerging population pressures that are beginning to impact Boston. And we have both in fact as well as in strategy tended to define how we could approach this. Basically it's one of encouraging population growth and residential development in the downtown area; the neighborhoods for young married and young singles where the pressures are greatest and the developers response has also been greatest. The greater downtown including Back Bay, Beacon Hill, the central area of Fenway-Kenmore and also Allston-Brighton, will be the prime expanding population residential area of the city. Then we have a second group of neighborhoods, the older neighborhoods, the suburban neighborhoods, where population pressures are also beginning and we think that's a very encouraging sign. That's the key to the revitalization process and we want to encourage it, but here in deference to neighborhood preferences for stability and cohesiveness, the city would attempt to constrain growth, and it has certain important tools at its disposal for that purpose, especially code enforcement, zoning, planning. Then we have a third group of neighborhoods, inner city neighborhoods and we anticipate some continuing demolition to recondition the housing stock and reduction of population over the next ten years. Here the goal would be stabilizatior.Basically, what this all adds up to is a process of social change that we will see in the next ten years.

This is a process of social change which includes change in the age composition of the population. We forsee growth in the 25-34 year old middle class young adults and we will see relative decline in the under 20 year old population in this period. Basically we're looking towards a 50,000 population growth over this period. We think that its one the city can absorb that would be compatable with the goals I've described and one with some kind of potential for improvement in the population balance in the city, reducing the difference in the equal distribution of city with relation the metropolitan area. We're looking toward growth in income levels and a narrowing of the disparity of income levels with respect to the metropolitan region. We're putting a lot of weight and importance on education reform. We think this is key, with the essential element being the city's plan III, which would help make the education system hold responsive to neighborhoods and responsive to elected city government. We're also looking forward to improvement in manpower training. And we're marshalling a program that is quite substantive, where investment targets of some$8 1/2 billion over a ten year period are involved, of which some 4 1/2 billion are already under way. This includes the city's own public facilities program. I might add that the city places emphasis on analyzing neighborhood impact. We will also be exploring financing alternatives to the financial strategy we discussed several weeks ago.

In addition to the public facilities program that are important targets and programs in housing. First we have a very challenging approach - goals for housing fix-up. Much of the city's housing stock is in good shape, some need major repairs, some need demolition. We estimate that $300 billion over a ten year period will do the job and much of that can be privately financed without any public intervention. In other aspects, though, the private money is not likely to come without loan insurance, neighborhood housing services, code enforcement, planning,

tax incentives, and we have been putting together a program that includes all of these. With respect to new housing we will see the private sector role emerge in response to rising incomes and rising population levels. There's a market in excess of 20-25,000 over the next ten years for housing, for middle and upper income families new housing. In addition we fashion the program for housing for the elderly. This is a special program, addressing a special need and we think we have a fine program shaped there. With respect to housing for other low and moderate income families, we have a strategy that essentially focuses on fixes income situation and special programs that would complement neighborhood strategies. In addition to the housing programs we have the special development areas I've mentioned and we have the urban renewal program. All these have quite an arsenal for achieving a lot in the city's neighborhood's and we hope to involve you in many of these aspects in the sequel to the last 6 months work. Just a brief word on distant strategy here. Essentially the approach is one of contraining growth and operating expenditures, holding the tax rate down, fighting for a tax reform. In a word what does this experience mean? I think it means that the impact of the public sector, private sector dialogue has been extraodinary. If we can label our last 6 month experience as an early planning, our next year's experience I would say would be implementation. The relevant aspects of this program are: the downtown growth program, the neighborhood strategy, the tax reform and financing strategy, housing fix-up, new housing, education reform, manpower training. I just want to conclude by saying I for one feel that we've done what we set out to do: we've discussed a lot of new information - some important aspects of the city's plan and I think the results have been greater than anticipated, and I'm pleased with the experience.

Hank Emerson: Let me share with you some comments Alex and I made. You've received the introduction to the report. When do you expect the rest to be available?

Alex Ganz: Perhaps in 2 weeks, this will be a preliminary summary of where the plan stands now.

Forecasts or plans?

Hank Emerson: In essence this will be an updated beginning, we began with a plan Nov. 15, and this will be an update of that. One thing concerns me. In many of our city presentations we've often talked about forecasts. It's not clear often times whether the city or city-private sector collaboration is going to take any action that will affect whether these things happen. Is it really a plan where there's an objective and a strategy where somebody has to do something? Or are these forecasts of something that's going to happen if trends continue? I hope to the extent possible your paper will make these things clear.

When you speak of transportation, a lot of the things that you expect to have happen are not under the control of the city. We have to be sure we understand those things that we can control vs. those things that are beyond the scope of the city's control, so that we can focus sharply on those few things that we can effectively do something about. Any questions for Alex?

Jim Kelso: I'm curious about one of the populations projections. If I understood you correctly you're saying that the middle groups will occupy a larger percent of the population while the younger population, those under 20 will decline? Where do the extra people come from, are you also forecasting an in migration?

Alex Ganz: Basically, what's been happening is that a lot of young adults have been coming into the area, while middle class families have been moving out. Two components of the population families and unrelated individuals have been moving in opposite direction. The city has been aquiring a rising level of unrelated individuals and a declining level of families. We anticipate that these trends will continue although we believe that city policy will encourage some time during this ten year period the beginning of the return of families.

Bob Saltonstall: One place Alex in your remarks you were talking about institutional development, and indicated that you were carrying this as far as your resources permitted. This is in turn relating to the possibility of more manufacturing jobs. What kinds of resources would be typical of what's needed? Is it just an absence of money to do certain things?

Alex Ganz: Exactly, for the task which is has to do, the EDIC is underfinanced. Especially taking into account the great difficulty that our recent review showed, in holding on to the present level of manufacturing jobs let alone recovering some. We have some expectations, or hopes rather, that new federal legislation will provide the economic development administration with more funds.

Bob Saltonstall: Filling this gap is a public responsibility then. You're not looking to anyone within this group to find some resources that might be available locally.

Alex Ganz: I think that would be the case. There is the private sector role that we think would be very important, but basically there is a public sector role in putting up front money for land assembly, the construction of industrial parks.

Bob Kiley: I think the discussion would be incomplete without introducing some other dimensions into the environment in which you're making your projections. Some of these matters are less tangible perhaps, and therefore less amenable to forecasting with certainty. I guess they come under the category of some negative factors or causes for apprehension. They have less to do with physical development, forecasting about jobs, or about which sectors of the economy might be growth sectors. They have to do more with the sorts of things I come in contact with on a daily basis. I'd like simply to throw out several notions that we see to be problems for all of us.

The Political Process

One of them is that in Boston, and I think it is characteristic of a lot of large cities, the political process isn't working very well these days. We're going to have an election on Tuesday which is to determine which of four plans may be pitted against the existing school system in the fall and there will be a great shock if something resembling 20% of the eligible electorate turn out at the polls. It will probably be a much lower figure than that. The existing school committee and city councilors generally get returned to office by that percentage of the electorate. It doesn't speak very well for broad citizen participation, and the kinds of issues you're raising Alex. It does strike me as being rather bizarre that dispite all the rhetoric over the last 6 months about the importance of education and the opportunity that may be upon us - perhaps the only one in the next 10 or 15 years - that we may have a turnout that is so low that some people may question the validity of whatever expression takes place. This seems to be a general phenomenon in this city. Perhaps in September and November when there will be state wide offices at stake the percentage will rise, and the last couple of years may only be a passing phenomenon. But there is other evidence it that suggest that for whatever reasons, and we are experiencing a problem in this respect. Whereever the new politics was a few years ago, it seems to have retreated to the margins. I think this is a problem because it goes beyond such phenomena the Watergate horrors.

Racial tensions

Another problem I think has to be cast against the background has to deal with racial tensions in our city. Many of them are subsurface unless you're dealing with a particular problem where race comes to the fore it is unlikely that you could be very much bothered. We tend not to be especially observant ot this matter, I don't know there may be an unspoken notion that unless things come to a flash point it's best that not a lot of attention be given to that dimension. We've been talking alot about the racial imbalance act over the last 6 or 8 months, about schools, bussing, and some how the issue of race has been subsumed by the question of neighborhood schools. There are at least some of us who can afford to be a little skeptical about the character of the debate that's been going on and the possible outcome. I think that Black people, especially, are apprehensive, frustrated and not getting much leadership in their own community, it's detectable that over the last 5-6 months the level of frustration in certain parts of town, in the minority areas, has risen. It's manifested in various small ways and hopefully over the course of the coming hot months cummulating in the fall, I think with the desegration plan that we'll get either from the state board court or the federal court you will not have visited upon a really difficult event. There

There seems to be a declining interest on the part of many people in the issue of racial relations. I'm not just talking about white folks, but black people as well. I don't know what the causal relationships are but for people in city government and institutions who are in the city, this ought to be a cause of some nervousness and concern.

Thirdly we do have a rise in violent crime. There does seem to be evidence that your chances of going out in the street and not just in the core city areas, and getting back safely, the decline is about 50% over the last 6-7 years. Dispite the F.B.I. statistics, which are manipulated,seem to show over the last several years that there's a decline in the rate of increase of violent crimes. There is other evidence to suggest that in fact the rate has been on the increase. We're beginning to learn through a serious effort by the census bureau and the Dept. of Justice to really survey people in all our cities to find out information. What we've begun to learn is that we have a problem with proportions exceeding even the gloomist of observors of the crime scene. Sometime during the summer, the returns in Boston will be in, after interviewing 25,000 people on a door to door basis. That process having been completed, the data will be compiled. It will probably suggest that somewhere between 2 and 3 times as much criminal activity has been going on under our noses, than had been reported as the crime rate. It doesn't make us the crime capital of the world but it does get us in to the competition.

One thing that's probably not an objective comment on my part but seems to be an objective, is the relationship that some of us have with citizens. The fears of some, that people are loosing their confidence in institutions, at least government institutions and the people who occupy them, may be correct. I think there is a growing and now expressed skepticism about the ability of government to deliver what it promises. That's always been in the grain of Americans throughout our history but there seems to have been some kind of quantum increase that is expressed, not in banging down the doors of city hall, although that happens but more in a decline in participation and willingness to moan and bitch and greave. That seems to me a passing phenomemon related to Watergate, and something that has been, at least in my experience, observable over the last several months.

Finally, a factor that has to be very much a part of any discussion of planning at the municipal level is the great confusion about federal domestic priorities. We are now into roughly our fifth year of the new federalism and it defies description. The amount of dollars that come down the pipe line have declined disturbing Boston's take home pay, and we have trouble measuring what it is that goes into the city. In terms of its tax dollars send to Boston, has by at least a very primative measure declined by about 50% over the last couple of years. Perhaps more important than a quantive measure is the quality of what dollars are going for and the quality of the debate that seems to be going on in Washington about what ought to happen to the country's cities.

Perhaps we're all weary from the problems of the 60's and early 70's but none the less, I think Alex tends to be very optimistic. There is a more pessimistic dimension to any conservation you might have with us on these issues.

Hank Emerson: So, where Alex says that the economic systems are go, apparently crime and violence and social issues are also go.

Bob Kiley: They are indeed.

Kirk O'Donnell: In terms of racial tension we recognize that. There is a real feeling in the city that the people who choose to live in the city are those who have no choice but to live in the city. They feel they are overwhelmed with burdens that should be shared outside of the city. We can see in terms of abandoned housing, that if given the opportunity and given some held, people are willing to fight. As far as the business community is concerned, as they did last night in Jamaica Plain, really focused in terms of lending practices of banks and red lining policies of insurance companies. There is no question that there's a sense of apathy and dissatification with city government. Boston has always had this though, probably more so than any other city. There's a rising skepticsm that's healthy. I think over the last ten years Boston has developed at least 200

recognizable civic associations and even more recognizable community leaders.

I feel the school situation is interesting in the respect that we don't see, at least from our observation, a feeling on the part of people that they want to flee the city. The fact is 40% of the white families in the city are sending their children to private schools, but there is still many who feel a commitment to face social change.

My last remark really focus on the problems of the city's neighborhoods in terms of prosperty and how one defines a good neighborhood. I think that some of the developments that have occured since those remakrs, the South End-North End clash between the new inmigration - professionals and the people who traditionally lived there, really poses what is a very serious problem for city government. It becomes more serious when the new South End residents say they want to perserve the South End. It comes to the real question of definations and while we really can go through a process of a lot of quantive measuring, I think it's been extremely valuable in the end. Alot depends on who's making those really political decisions and value decisions on the part of city government and the private sector.

Dun Gifford: I find it fascinating that the planning agency has painted a rosy, optimistic picture of the future of the city for us, and Bob and Kirk talk about distrust and suspiction. I'm not sure what the implications of this are, but I feel it's worth thinking about.

I'd like to mention that I've somewhat of a hobby following elections returns. The one most recently held, and one upcoming, are noted for low turn outs. Those pushing the special elections have a particular interest, they want a result, and they're going to get it, their people will turn out. It happens whether it's a bond issue or a racial imbalance vote or whatever. I don't think that's any different today than it has been in the country's history. When there is a special election most people yawn.

In the context of what Kirk said from his vantage point of the Little City Halls, I think most of the serious literature about urban problems and urban futures predicts that it is only through neighborhood based delivery of municipal services that there is any hope of creating a cohesive structure. So that it's my own view that amoung the things that are most important to Boston's future is a concentration by the city, and all municipal departments, upon what the neighborhoods and the Little City Halls are doing and whether or not through your position of deputy mayor, you could try and break down those great municipal departments which treat the city as a whole and force them somehow to work through neighborhood participation, using the halls as delivery centers.

Kirk O'Donnell: I think you've an excellent point. It certainly is where our whole effort in that sense is located. But there's an important critical part of that. Usually a ward healer called up one of the fellows who worked for him to get the mayor elect to fill a pothole. You can decentralize that strucutre but a heck of a lot has to be concerned with the people who are within that structure. To a great extent the problem is when there's a problem in South Boston, it can be fixed, but if the same problem occured in Roxbury,we have to get the Little City Hall Manager or someone else to fix it. There has to be a sense of not only having a city government that is physically close to you, but a city government that has people in it to care about that neighborhood because they come from there.

Dun Gifford: That perfectly illustrates the point. Southie had owned city government for 50 years, Roxbury has never, even on a small piece of city government and until they do, Roxbury is going to distrust anybody in any official position that comes in there because they think something else is going to be taken away from them.

Kirk O'Donnell: Yes, but the way the process has occured, and it's occuring all around the country, is showing a tremendous amount of real disatification with decentralization. We can't neglict the structure as it exists now, and yet there are reforms that are going to have to occur hopefully prior to that returning of responsibility, by civil service, centeralized budgeting and the regular political structure as it exists now with a plan aid form of government, strong mayor at large city council will have occur as well. It can't just be opening up neighborhood service delivery.

Jim Kelso: The role that a poverty agency like ABCD, now they've X millions of dollars they've been delivering. The question whether they've been effective or not, some of you feel with these apex wards again with Kirk is trying with services I see headaches there coming up, where is this going to go. You brought up the new federalism Bob, ABCD does deliver certain types of services which can keep lids on and satisfy with Headstart, of Legal Aid, or Manpower which is one thing. Where do you see this going in the next yeat or so?

Bob Kiley: It's likely the poverty agencies will be sustained, at least technically speaking over the next year. A bill was just reported on in committee that will sustain the OEO structure as it now exists, which means that ABCD will be sustained. One of the weaknesses of the President is he really can't deal with that kind of issue. I think it will live until the end of this present administration, regardless of who's President.

Jim Kelso: But can you as a city make it more effective?I think it has great potential but have some reservations as to how effective it is.

Bob Kiley: One of the facets of the new federalism of special revenue sharing is that the responsibility for distributing those funds really is supposed to be the chief executive officer of the city, the Mayor in this case. He theorically has leverage under the new federalism but in fact the reality is that enough committments have been made over the years, that the amount of real flexibility particularly when the total pie has been deminished, there's no flexibility whatsoever. As a matter of fact there now that the buffer that a Mayor can have between him and all kinds of groups making claims on it, the federal government, or congressman where contract where he doesn't totally control is missing, and indeed there are at the moment in the area of manpower ABCD is the principle deliver of that service. The pie has been cut and the mayor has the technical responsibility for distribution of those funds. There's great tension between the manpower administration and ABCD in the Mayor's Office. There's a lot of tension and hysteria on all sides and very little effort to look at the programs and to see how we can move here and there. I guess it was all rather predicable but not a lot of planning was done, I must say, on our part. We just walked into the situation. Now we're saying that manpower is a model that we'll look at so that when community development revenue sharing happens we won't be caught by surprise. I don't know Jim what the answer to your question is about trying to help ABCD deliver a better produce.

Hank Emerson: Lou will wait for a week from today to present the M.I.T. Urban Dynamics overview of this same thing. I think we've come to a good stopping point, and again it seems to me we heard some pros and cons and going away with a lot of questions and hopefully new information. Thanks for coming.

Adjourn

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program June 6, 1974

Remarks by Jay Forrester

Hank Emerson: This is the last of our luncheon series. I think we're going to find quite a contrast since we have almost established a continuum between today's meeting, where we're going to be hearing primarily from Jay Forrester who is as long a range thinker as our contemporary society possess, broad in his thinking, and certainly not expedience oriented in any way. At our dinner meeting next week we will be hearing from the city's chief executive officer, Kevin White, and his frame of reference will undoubtly be somewhat political and somewhat short term. So we will be looking at both ends of this continuum.

Jay Forrester: I haven't planned any lengthy or set comments, and I hope that after lunch we can rely primarily on your questions and the kinds of issues you would like most to discuss. I'll open perhaps by saying a little bit about where the urban field seems to stand and tell you some about the work that we're now doing on dynamics of social and economic change in the U.S. as a whole because I think that is really relevant to the problems that the cities all face. Let me go back to my perception of what's been happening since the urban dynamics book came out.

As you probably know, it ran into a very mixed reaction, with many people being extremely favorably impressed and a certain number being extremely critical, and we've had time enough now to look at that criticism, to spend a great deal of time on it, and to come to some observations about it. I thought it might be worth saying a few words on the kinds of reactions that have been to the book.

Reactions to Urban Dynamics

The favorable comment for the most part come from what in the sense of the word I will call operators, people who have to do something today. These are people like medical doctors, business men, political leaders, citizens, and the people who realize that we always make decisions on the basis of insufficent information and that we make decisions on the basis of the best set of assumptions and models that we have at a particular moment, realizing that they are not perfect. Take the medical analogy. If you were to go to your doctor and you were feeling very badly and rapidly worse and he were to say "that's a very interesting case but I'm not absolutely sure of the diagnosis or treatment and if you'll just wait 20 years I'm sure that medical research will have the proper answer;, you wouldn't feel that it had been a very worthwhile visit, because you expect him to do the best he can now and at the moment.

Urban Dynamics was well received by people with that frame of mind. They realize, as we do, that it has imperfections and a great deal more that needs to be done beyond the book, but see it as a useful viewpoint and something that helps to better understand the situation. The highly critical comment, of which there's been a great deal in the professional press particularly largly comes from those who are professional critics, whose business is to be critical. They essentially say "you haven't proved to me you're right". They don't have to do anything in the mean time, and they can wait until the situation becomes clearer. Most of us, and I think most of you, can wait until that time, since you're involved in having to do something today, this week, this month, and the question is really not whether a viewpoint as expressed in the urban dynamics sense is perfect, but rather, is it more helpful than whatever you would otherwise have used.

The Utility of the "Urban Dynamics" Model

In that regard many people seem to feel that we can't afford to take the risk of making decisions on the basis of models because we aren't sure the models are correct, but I submit to you that we have no choice whatsoever about making decisions on the basis of models because one does not have a family or a school system of a city or a country in his head, one only has assumptions about families and school systems an cities in his head, and these assumptions, these mental images that we use, are

models in every sense of the word that a computer model it. We use those assumptions to arrive at conclusion. The question really is whether we find an explicitly stated model for which we can determine dynamic and future consequences, whether we find that kind of a model helpful to use along with out mental models, more persuasive than certain aspects of our mental models if it seems to be mre persuasive and it it seems to be more informative then it seems to be one should use it until something better comes along. Some of the criticism has been almost irrational, I've had a full professor of social science at my own institution come up to me and say "I don't care whether you're right or wrong, the results are unacceptable". Well, that is an extreme position but it has gone that far. What has happened though with respect to the negative criticism in a more useful way is that if you have spent alot of time looking into most of it, a very curious thing happens.

As you begin to look at the specific criticism they tend to melt away they tend to shift ground, they tend to become something else, and generally speaking they tend to converge with what in fact is in the urban dynamics book. There have been several lines of this criticism, one for example that the assumptions about migration in the book are quite at odds with the social science literature on the subject. Well it turns out there is no such literature. You may find that surprising, but we have searched for, pressed the people who have made the criticism for it and it simply does not exist in any meaningful way. There is a particular book that is usually sighted in the book review as being the source of the information that clearly contradicts Urban Dynamics, but it has to do with the relationship between housing and migration. That book does not have the word housing in it anywhere, I've searched it cover to cover; the word "dwelling" appears once. It is silent on the subject of the effect of migration but these presumptions at a very superficial level circulate and really cloud the issues we're all interested in. They cloud the whole depth of understanding that all of you want to get into.

I'm not saying for a moment that there are not problems and not a great deal more to learn about urban dynamics. But curious thing is that the real weaknesses in the book have never been mentioned in the criticisms. I would say there are two I'd like to share with you; one is that the book as it stands doesn't reach down to the level of the everyday decisions. It's a very broad brush kind of book, and it doesn't really help much if a city administrator is sitting across the desk from the man who wants a zoning variance, it doesn't really tell him in any sure fire way what he should do. And he's apt to misinterpret the message even if he's read the book carefully and even if he were trying to apply this message, he might very well arrive as a misunderstanding or a wrong conclusion about what the book really says with respect to that particular issue. So a great deal more work is necessary to bring the message down to the day to day operating decisions. Alot of work has been done on that since 1969 with the aid of a major grant from H.U.D. with a particular application that probably you've discussed or know about with respect to Lowell, Mass. Quite alot has also been done to try to bring the modeling and interpreting closer to the specific day to day action because it really is in the day by day actions that the future of a city is formed. It's not in broad concepts, but everything that's done, every decision that's made every day has an impact that ripples out for 10, 15, 20, 30 years. The zoning change, the building permit ordinance, one way or another about rent control, everything that is done has consequences that extend from now out into the future and the composite of all of those make the future of the city. There is no lever, there is no decision, where you can turn it and a good city is created or a bad city. It is the way in which all of these separate things interact, and interact down through time, which set the future nature and character of the city. And that deficiency of the book is only a deficiency in time and effort, in other words it's not a weakness in the sense that the book doesn't presume to do it, but there hasn't been enough time and effort put in to do it. It's just a matter of an incomplete job and the only remedy is time.

The other weakness in the book, again one as far as I know which has never been mentioned in public print is that there is an atmosphere, a tone in the book, a presumption in the book that we can return the American cities to their former status of socio-economic converters in which they sweep in the poor people from all over the world

or all over the country, create opportunity for them, give them upward economic mobility and send them out to found new cities and to build suburbs and to create new enterprises elsewhere. There is a weakness in the book in that regard because times have changed and the frontier isn't out there any more. In fact there's some question about the ability to the cities to sweep in the world's poor and underprivilaged and send them out to greater and broader futures, because there's no place to send them out to, or rapidly it's getting to the situation where there's no place to send them out to. That brings us up to the realtionship between urban dynamics and more recent work that has been done. As we began to do the World Dynamics and the Limits to Growth work, it is probably more visable, much more in the public eye, than Urban Dynamics itself, and will become even clearer in the new program now that we're not in the modeling of dynamics of social and economic change in the U.S. I thought I would say a few words about that just to give you a glimpse of what's going on and then out of all of this plus what you already know I'm sure we'll be ready to engage in questions and answers and general discussion.

New Research

We are now involved in a program much more substantial than the ones that led to either urban dynamics or the world dynamics programs, I might say the perhaps you don't know this, that those two books were both done without any financial sponsorship whatsoever. There was no financial help or assistance of computer time but none for either of those books so they were strictly personal efforts by myself, or myself and another person that worked on them, and except for this volunteer time there was nothing invested in either of those books. Therefore it was necessary for them to come very early, and as a result a sort of first look, they both stood up a great deal better than perhaps we had any reason to believe at the time when they came out. Somewhat by contrast this work on the dynamic socio-economic change in the U.S. is sponsored, we have three year funding from the Rockefellers that allows us to have a staff of 6-8 people, and so this is going to be done in considerably greater depth, much more comprehenisve. The model itself is maybe as many as two orders of magnitude, more through and complex, more than what you see in either Urban Dynamics or World Dynamics. The emphasis of this effort to the extent that emphasis on a focal point is necessary in order to identify what one wants to do, and to choose or reject what is to go into the model, the emphasis is on the forces underlying inflation and the situations involved in foreign exchange and exchange rates and the shifting of population of one section, to another and what this does as the economy grows and changes, what happens to a national economy as it begins to run into its spatial and resource and environmental limits.

This work is not complete, we do not even have a computer model running yet. So anything that I say about it is pure speculation and guess work and to what it's going to begin to show, I'm going to warn you because I may very well in a year or two change my mind on a number of things. But it seems to be that one that's going on in the country is a massive shift of people out of direct production into what I will call overhead activities.

About 1/3 of the working population in the U.S. now remains in agricultue and direct manufacturing production. Approximately 2/3 are somewhere else. It is in the service industry, in government employment, in the milatary and the military contracters, welfare, social security supported elderly people, that there is a very large fraction of the population that are not producing the things whose price is rising and giving us the present inflation that there is a very large group of people who in a sense are living on the output of these production streams. Now this was alright as long as the shift did not go too far and as long as the productivity of the remaining agricultural and manufacturing sectors was rising very rapidly. It seems to be that the productivity is not going to be able to continue rising as rapidly as it has in the past because a brief view of it is running into various sorts of limits. The agricultural sector is running into land limits as well as pollution limits as well as resource and energy limits.

The Inefficiency of American Agriculture

There is an illusion that alot of people have that the agricultural sector in the U.S. is of remarkably high efficiency. You see this statement time after time

that it is a tremendously efficient sector. It is in terms of the food produced per worker in the field, but in other terms it's not effective. The American agriculture sector produces one calorie of food, one calorie of energy output for every six calories put in, in other words it is a 1/6 effeciency converter of petroleum into food and this gives you some glimpse of why the cost of food rises, if the cost of energy goes up the cost of food goes up because food is about 1/6 of the energy input. In other ways it is far from efficient.

The agra-business sector as defined by some people, in other words everyone involved in one way or another in food is about a 1/3 of the economy. Well, the efficiency of that sector can not have improved more than three times in all of history because it still 1/3 of the total activity, by this I mean the fertilizer factories, the food processers, the people that ship food, the people who sell food, the people that prepare food, it's still 1/3 of the economy, so that it's quite misleading to simply look at a farm and say one man farms 600 acres and isn't that efficient, because what we've done is take people off the farm and out them into the backup for the farming, and the amount of rising efficieny is not as great as it seems and as we pull people out of the manufacturing and the agricultural sectors we have a very large group in government and military and the service sectors and they're now dependent on a rather small base of fundemantal production. As soon as we run into any sort of difficulties like the rising price of energy, we then have a couple of choices. One is to allow the economic forces to again force a realignment. The economic forces of too many people in the farms available,new tractors going back into the 20 and 30's, tractors and capital investment in the farming led through the 20 and 30's to a great deal of economic hardship in the argicultire sector because it essentially was a surplus producer and its prices were driven down to rock bottom and the standard of living was driven down, and the effect of this was to force people out of the argiculture sector moving initially toward manufacturing and more recently toward the service sector.

Now the reverse flow is probably timely and would be caused by the same kind of hardship in the sectors where people are in surplus. In one way this would allow the standard of living in those surplus to fall, they would be in the service sector and government and military expenditure, as well as in welfare and to some extent the people over 65 who are still quite capable of working and doing effective things for the economy. One way would be to allow the standard of living to fall until the economic forces push people back in the manufacturing and agriculture where the labor shortages now exist. Alternatively we could do what we essentially are doing, which is to say everyone should have his standard of living kept up and through government expenditure and fiscal policy and monetary policy we will attempt to prevent hardship anywhere, which in effect increases people in those areas where they are essentially surplus for the long run in the future, and we're preventing the relianment as I see it, going back into the areas that now are beginning to be under populated. All of this is very important to the city because the city I think has great control over its own destiny but in a particular way. It can control its future relative to the country in which it is set, and it can be better or worse than other cities that are also in that same environment. But it's relative to the environment and if the environment is getting better even a city that's in trouble is pulled up and gets better with the rising economic conditions. Likewise if the economy is moving into greater difficulty a city maybe could be down in absolute terms but still has the opportunity to adjust itself as being good or bad relative to that environment. So you can think of it as a tide going up and down, you can be an effective sailor on a high tide or a low tide, but the point is the city is absolute terms is kind of caught in the middle.

What's happening to the economy as a whole and then what it is doing relative to that economy in other cities, and the clear case I think for local urban management within a particular city is to focus on what he can do relative to the rest of the economy, bearing in mind that it's going to be pulled to some extent up and down by that economy, if the country as a whole moves into very considerable difficulities in rising social stress and the need for realignment of people between sectors the city cannot escape entirely those pressures, but it can foresee them perhaps and it can guard against them and it can make itself more or less venerable.

The Service Sector

I have a feeling that maybe that has emerged already about the service sector that seems to me is particularly important to a city like Boston which is in many ways a service oriented city. Let's put it in the most extreme light, just to get you to thinking about the other end of the spectrum from the one you've seen in the business press where the business press radiates the feeling that the service sector is the wave of the future and people have been moving into the service sector and therefore that's where the future lies. It might also be said that the service sector is a place where the society stores people that it isn't using in the production sectors and isn't yet so desititute that it has to put them on unemployment, that it's a half way house between manufacturing and unemployment. I mean this in all seriousness because if the economic system runs under rising stress that's going to show up first in ther serivce sector, it's not going to show up in the agricultural sector or the fundamental necessary things like refrigerator nearly as quick as its going to show up in the financial district and the stock market and the consulting companies and the people that are riding on the crest of a transition that may very well be at its end. To draw an analogy here for Boston the service sector has something for the future, maybe as allusive as the textile industry at its peak. In other words at its peak it was about to go into a recession and the industry would move elsewhere and the service sector may ver well be at such a peak. And so one ought to debate that, it's an opinion, it's not an insured fact, but I think there is enough logic behind it that it's a very serious matter, it ought to be seriously considered, it ought to be debated and one ought to be asking himself how much diversication does he want.

The Future

What might be the nature of the future if I'm right it should be like the moves down the service that committs itself more and more to the service sector, means it's committing itself more and more to some difficiulities, whereas if it were to ask itself what is at future economy even if it's under pressure and under stress, what is it most going to need, and perhaps the move in that direction it can alleivate the future pressures that it's under. Now all of this as I told you awhile ago, is largely speculation and I would feel alot more confident in what I'm saying if we were one or two years further along in the national modeling, but I rather suspect that this kind of thing will be seen there to have been some preliminary models that are incomplete that do support the kind of comments I've made, but I don't necessarly trust fully them but the logic of it seems fairly persuasive to me and some model that we've already done seems to support it. I throw it out for consideration because whether or not it's right it's worth consideration and many of you are associated in one way of another with the service sector and I think it prudent at least to debate it. One should avoid falling into popular traps and being carried downstream without even having stoped to ask the question, "is it really the wave of the future or not?" So it is in issue to that sort what are the major future sectors of country, what does the country itslef have to run into in the way of difficulty, what is the tide on which the city is floating, it's at those points that the work we're going in the national modeling will tie with things that are local urban and try within the scope of the local unit. Now one other comment, there really is no such thing as the national system, it's a composit of all of the local systems and one thing that we've seen over the last few decades, 10 years anyways, in cities I think is a sense of futlity, a feeling that they can't do anything because they're victims of forces bigger than they, and I went to a seminar in New York on the nature and problems of cities, and the theme of that particular meeting what can cities do for themselves, and I would say that the moderator was not able to keep that meeting on the theme for more than 5 minutes, because the whole 50 people there were absolutely convinced in their own minds the cities can't do anything, the state has to do it, or the national government has to do it. I differ with this completly, it seems to me the cities have a great deal of leverage and in fact the country is the sum of its city, and that if the cities take wise action they can set the national tone, they can determine the national policies, and they can do a great deal on their own, even independent of the national and state policies. In the studies that we've made, the theme that runs through urban dynamics

I think suggests that there's actually more that cities can do for themselves than is popularly presumed and the cities attempt to act in their own behalf, will then become an example, will set a style for other cities and will have a major impact on the future of the country.

Hank Emerson: We'll just open things to questions at this point.

Bill Smith: Professor Forrester, in a society like ours, and as this thing goes on over the years it seems to me it's only natural that innefficiency we're talking about using less people, maybe it's the wrong difinition, as that continues if we're going to be more efficient does it follow that these people have got to go into the service industry and what do you do about that?

Jay Forrester: Let's look at it this way. We've been through a very long period since the founding of the country where production has been rising exponentially, population has also been growing with this same upward sweeping curve but it has somewhat slower rate, in other words population has doubles with the somewhat longer time than output has doubled and it's that which accounts in the rising material standard of living, that output production has been doing up faster than population, that's all right as long as the open end exponential growth can continue. I think it's perfectly clear to anyonw there's really no controversy over this point that process can't go on forever, the controversy is over when will it change and what's the nature of the change, there really is no conterversy over the question whether or not the growth of output can continue, it can not. At some point it's going to start slowing down, I suggest that it's beginning to slow down now or it is coming under the pressures that it's going to cause it to slow down, and now the crucial question is how does population growth act with respect to the rising production, if population growth continues to rise now faster than output, this implies a falling standard of living, and we're changing, shifting from one set of economic limits to another, the set inclusive in your question was that production is a function of capital and labor and productivity and the material standard of living depends on a rising amount of capital per capita, in other words more capital equipment per workers leads to more output and to a higher standard of living, and this is what has been true in a country that's started with a very low population a very large amount of argiculture land, a very bountiful resources, a large amount of water, a great deal of polution. For a very long time we've been in that position where output could continue to rise and there were no nature limits on total output so that the output per capita could increase with larger and larger amount of capital equipment and the higher productivy that you speak of. Now if you get to the point where nature limits total production in terms of available energy, available agricultural space, available space to live in, available pollution capacity, there are all sorts of things that can produce such a limit. If you get into a limit set by the natural environment then you're in a situation where let us say the other extreme, and it is an extreme, but just to make the point, the other extreme is that the total production is set by environmental capacity and it's not set by either capital or labor or the ratio between them, it's set by the capacity of the environment to produce output and there's enough capital and enough labor to exhaust that capacity and you're now in a region where the total average productivity for the country does not go up with more capital per capita, it's set by the natural limit. And so the capital per capita, the efficiency you speak of becomes not an economic question but a social question, a social question in the context of whether you would like to have a society with a small number of people, have a large amount of capital produce everything that is going to be consumed or whether as a matter of social policy it's good for everyone to have a job and you in fact want a lower amount of capital and a lower productivity of the people who are actually working. You see the productivity as a whole is independent because the total production divided the population and the total production is consistant and the question now is what fraction of the population do you want to have in production and how are you going to provide the transfer payment or the welfare or what ever it is for those who are not working, and so it becomes a social question of how you want to divide up the jobs and whether you want high productivty with large amounts of capital and small number of people or whether in fact you don't. It's just a matter of how you distribute that capacity of nature between the various jobs, now I say that's an

extreme position, but it sets the other side of the question and I suggest we are in the transition between those two. And so the whole set of ideas about productivity and wanting higher capital investment I think you're going to come under question, and just like the service industry issue that I raised, it's an issue that ought to be faced because it's probably any longer what it has been in the past, so it's moving into a region where it's different from what we've assumed, it's different from the folklore of the past presidents and the patterns that we have fallen into.
Bill Smith: Just a quick follow up question, I read yesterday, in Mexico they're facing this question on their highway program the decision of whether to build or bring in huge earth moving machines or to use hand labor and they're tending to go for the hand labor, the same thing in India where 341,000,000 farmers produce the same thing that our 6,000,000 do.
Jay Forrester: If you're in a labor excess economy up against an environment limit then that's perfectly sensible thing, because the production is going to be the same either way and the social instabilty that may come from having earth moving equipment building the roads while x millions of people look on and have nothing to do and either don't have a means of support or are living in a government welfare which seems to me basically unsatificatory will lead to political instabilty and probably revolution and break down of the governmental political system with chaos that doesn's solve anything but stirs it around.
Speaker: You used the limiting terms, county and society, if you broaden your look into world economy and world systems does that change your hypothesis any? Well you can say all the same things about the world as a whole on the average but perhaps I'm not quite sure the full depth of your question but perhaps relative to it I do not believe that we are going to arrive at a one world solution to these problems, there's no mechanism for doing it, there's no mechanism for doing it, there's no strength in organization like the United Nations, there's no ability of such a world government to impose anything on national governments. I don't even believe that they should, but be that as it may I don't think it will happen, and therefore we face again something quite different I think from the common viewpoint that one sees in the editorial pages of the newspapers, there is kind of an idea that the whole world is working in an equal situation. Now that, I think, is an absolute fallacy from the standpoint of sociology or economics or ethics because let's look at it from the ethical viewpoint for a moment, the argument for equality is basically an ethical argument, but let's look at that for a moment. Imagine two countries side by side, they each have a relatively modest population in terms of their internal support capacities so they both have a relatively high standard of living and they are both in that situation with the rising population as most countries have them, now let's suppose that one country takes the steps to limit it's population to it's environmental capacity so that it can live within that capacity at a high standard of living.

The other country does not go through the experience and it will be a difficult experience. It does not go through the traumatic experience of coming to terms with that situation and producing the population limitation, it allows population to move up against its environmental limits. Now both of them are in a situation where the standard of living depends on the ratio of the country capacity to the population, and the higher the population the lower will be the standard of living. Suppose 50 years later that we have the first country having gone through the difficult transition of coming to terms with its future and its capacity and it is living at a high standard of living, and the other country that took the easy way at the beginning is now in the situation of India. Now should those two countries be legislated to be equal 50 years from now, if so it means sharing between them and if so you have removed every incentive for the first country to have taken the steps necessary to insure its future. Because if it has to go through all of the trauma of the present to solve its long range problems and is not going to be allowed to benefit from it in future because someone else did not, then there's no incentive for anyone to face the problem today, so there is essentially a long time to question the ethics here, and I think there is no solution at all to the idea that either by happen stance or good luck or economic motives or legislation that you will get equality, because you will get that kind of equality at the lowest level that any society is willing to endure, and that

basically will be unsatisfactory. So what I'm suggesting that this will revert when the nature of the issues are really seen, that this may revert to a more limited view point, let's say first the national viewpoint, and subdivide that, in which a country either does or doesn't do something about over taxing its environment and in the future reaps the consequences of whatever it does. Just consider for a moment that Massachusetts has one and half times the population density of India, and it is probably no better able to support a population within its own boarders than is India.

A state like Massachusetts is in the position of the country as a whole, it's living beyond its own means. It is living on imports and markets, both of which are vunerable and apt to disapear. So the developed countries are probably the most vunerable of all the countries, it isn't the under developed countries, and the most vunerable is Japan. It is already beginning to show, what would Japan be without foreign resources and foreign markets.It's absolutely geared to the availability of foreign resources and the availability of foreign markets, and what's happening to those markets to which its selling are developing the capability of using their own resources with their own labor for their own markets. As soon as run its course nobody needs Japan, likewise they don't need Western Eurpose or the U.S. The U.S. would be in a very difficult situation not nearly as bad as Japan, but it would be in a difficult situation if it had to support its present population out of its internal resources and capacity. I don't think it would be an intolearable life but it would be quite a change - that means no oil, no mineral resources. But the rising population means that the situation gets worse and worse, and a lot of people have the idea that we are now at a zero-growth population, that is not at all true. We are at a birth rate per women such that it will in time lead to an equilibrium population, but that time is about the year 2020 at a population of about 70% above what the U.S. now has. So a 70% increase in the U.S. population will again change the internal situation a great deal especially if it happens at a time when we're coming under external pressure as I think very clearly we are and which we've seen only the beginning. The life cycle models of economic development that we've worked out don't give a viewpoint that goes like this.

There's been alot of effort over the last couple of decades to get western industrialized style of economic growth started in various underdeveloped countries. In my opinion the reason why you can't start economic development in India is because it is already at the end point of economic development, it's not at the beginning, it's not a place from which you start, it's the end point and all countries will run toward that end point if they don't activity chose policies to come out somewhere else. The standard of living in India was very high 900 years ago and its been going downhill ever since. It's essentially at the end point of too many people for it's internal capacity, and at that point anything you do to provide more food simply means you immediately have more people and not that you have a high standard of living, and not having come to terms with the population problem, it is simply committed to be pushed against the wall until it does that, and there is nothing you can do about. The threatening part of it is that it's the end point toward the developed countries, Japan, Western Europe and the U.S. could move over a period of a number of decades, if that process is not understood and there's something fairly fundemental is not done about.

Speaker: If that process is understood, that is to say that the vunerability of the developed nations is becoming more and more evidence as they get more and more developed if that is understood what courses or implications are available to policymakers in the governments of these countries?

Jay Forrester: Well I've said that the most fundamental underlying issue is the ratio of population to the countries capacity.

Speaker: That's an implication I don't think it sets a policy.

Jay Forrester: If you start with that viewpoint then for most countries the problem is the population is already high enough or too high or becoming too high, in other words that to try to deal with the symptoms of rising population has only the effect of taking the pressure off from the population question, in other words if you have too much drug addiction because really you've got excess people and they're hopeless and frustrated and they don't have any place where they're needed so that's where they

end up, you don't solve that problem really in any fundamental way by trying to put drug pushers in jail, they will turn up in crime or hyjacking or kidnapping or something else, there are all kinds of outlets for this sort of social behavior that comes from the unbuckling of the individual from any useful place in society. So if you begin to see it as a fundamentally population vs. national capacity problem then I think that a great deal more that can be done about population than is normally presumed. We have a social system that's laced through and through with incentives for increasing population, it's in the legal system, the tax system, religious systems, in the social heritage, the folk lore. There have been numerous examples of countries that have come to a stable population by simply reversing all those social incentives for activity increasing population, and it has occured in several places so quickly, and to those involved that they have in fact backed off and reversed their policy back toward increasing population. Rumania or Hungary a few years back decided that they really have a probelm of too much population and they did, a very large number of things to try to reduce the growth of population, and they got scared out if it. They were effective enough that and perhaps incorrectly not seeing maybe it wasn't a bad thing, that they backed out of it, same way Japan and India did. There have been efforts that were sufficiently effective that in fact the effectiveness had caused people to back off because they were not quite prepared for the results to work, and so I think there's alot that can be done. If we just take the most obvious simple examples we have incentives in the welfare system, incentives in the income tax for additional children, it's laced through the legal systems, quite a few of the religions are so based, and all of those are subject to change if there was any popular feeling that in fact it was the problem. Instead you see what we are doing is to say well here is this problem of not enough roads, problem of crime, here's the problem of drug addiction, here's the problem of more parking, these are all manifestations of the over loaded population problem, but we tried to work on the symptom and that takes the emphasis off the underlying cause, allows it not only to continue to run its course but in fact takes away the pressures that might eventually cause people to focus on it. So we're engaged in an intermediate process of essentially avoiding the underlying issue and you can do that for awhile,but the longer you do it, the more difficult is the underlying stress when you get to it.

Speaker: That thesis is very challenging to many of us who've read your book and who have wondered about it, but I'd like to try to bring it down to Boston and something this group over the months has talked about, and something which by strange coincidence the BRA is announcing today as official policy, that is that henceforth it will not be city policy that the Combat Zone be abolished or chased around, but that it be renamed, upgraded and given trees and nice sign controls, but that it be allowed to remain in its location and to perform its obvious functions, as msot of the mature cities in the western world have done. Now is that the kind of realistic look at a bleeding sore of the city at least in some people's eyes that you're encouraging and that the system would encourage?

Jay Forrester: Let me tie what I said about national population back to the city and you may have to refrain from your answer before I can quite be sure what you mean. It seems to me that running through is the idea that the city should decide what it's population ought to be, how much housing should it have, how many jobs to provide and as somebody explained it to me the other day, and I think a very interesting analogy - you go to a hotel, and they say sorry the rooms are all sold, so you have to go elsewhere. Alternatively the hotel could keep putting on additional floors if it's foundations were strong enough and it would put on floors until the coffee shop isn't big enough for the number of people, the elevators won't serve it, and after awhile they would have on so many floors they would always have space available but nobody would want to come to that hotel. In many ways our cities are doing that, they're trying to increase their capacity, more high rise, more apartments, more of everything without ever really asking itself does this make a better city for the residents, it makes a bigger city, it makes more people, it makes population density, but it also makes more combat zones, more drug addiction, more crime, and do we really want that? The alternative to that is to try to arrive at some kind of consensus, much easier to say than to do, but a consensus about what the population of the city ought to be, and then

take those steps necessary to keep it from increasing, and mostly you keep it from increasing by not having any more housing units then you would like to have people, and there maybe some other things you can do, but individually cities can do that. Now the rejoinder to that is well the population for the country is growing and they have to go somewhere alright, but do they have to go to Boston. By the time they go to Houston, by the time Boston doesn't allow them to come in, by the time Delaware doesn't by the time the eastern slopes of Colerado don't and by the time Oregon finds someway to implement its inclination then they will go to those few remaining places and those places will see very quickly what the consequences will be and by that time you will have a national consensus to do something about it. What I'm saying is the national consensus can not be created on a national basis, the national consensus will be created as the spreading of ideas that orignate and get implemented initially on the local basis, because there is no national consensus for a complete reversal of policy, we've got a set of policies for 2000 that have served us very well, but it doesn't mean that they're viable for the future, and if I'm right many of those policies must be completely reversed, you cannot possibly them from the White House or from Congress because there is no constituency for the reversal, as long as they are the reversal of what the country thinks it wants, the reversal must occur in the minds of a few individuals who begin to spread the ideas in a few cities or towns where its grown to the point of a consensus, and you get a situation like in Oregon where there is a great deal of deviance in a limited population, they've found out how to accomplish it but you realize from these nuclei a new future national policy, and only when you have that will you solve the country's fundamental problem, but I'm saying that individually different areas and cities can, I think move part way down the road that I was suggesting for the nation's relative to the world and that is to a certain extent they can decide things for themselves like the amount of population because the amount of population in a city is a consequence in all those decisions about what to do about schools, parks, and policeman and housing permits, etc. The sum of all of them produce some cities with very high population density and some cities with low.

R. Siddharth: From what you've said this afternoon I've noticed two things. One is I think you're pinpointing an apparent failure of social and political institutions to take a long term view, you're saying more of them the short term view is good because the short is usually contradictory to the long term view. And the second aspect of what you said you're exposing a grass roots down to the approach which implies the game, you have to tackle the education system, the value system, you'll have a rewriting of the text books, in that sense if you accept those two what have your own efforts been in making these necessary changes?

Jay Forrester: Well we're very new in this compared to the magnitude of the issues we're talking about and it's only been five years since Urban Dynamics came out and you don't expect things to happen very fast not do you do all of those things on a budget of a few hundred thousand dollars a year. On the other hand it might encourage you if I mention this to you. I get various kinds of people who write in with respect to the various books we published. It's rather kind of outstanding in my recollection of these letters that the very best letters, the most penetrating letters about Urban Dynamics have in them questions that clearly go beyond the book for which there are not answered in the book and the writer knows there are not answers in the book and it is evident that the writer understands what is in the book. These letters come to me on lined notebook paper by high school students, and they are harder level letters than I get from university facility members, that is got something at least marginally relevant to your questions. My principal systems book which starts all of that at a fairly elementary level is used probably in 60 universities and is known to quite a number of high school students. There is, however, a need to directly go about the secondary school and college curriculum problems and I am being approached from time to time from people with money enough to do it and see the need for it and would like to organize it, it hasn't happened yet, there's quite a task to get the right kind of people to understand well enough to begin writing things to produce something. I feel certain all those things will occur, it's just a matter of when, and when there is enough understanding by sufficiently competent people and enough funding behind it

to carry it through, but quite a wide range of people who are doing something within their own personal time and resources and in the other side people who control money who see the need who haven't quite decided to back it.

There is a great interest in Europe and Japan, perhaps more than here in the U.S. It is very popular in Holland, because they are very close to all the problems mentioned in the Limits to Growth book, the public is sentitive and knowledge on the subject. The U.S. is still living in its image of its fronteir economy.

Hank Emerson: Something we've talked about a great deal is the job-people mismatch in our city, where we have a large number of underemployed or unemployed people and we have offered various strategies such as creating more jobs or changing our education systems so these people might better match jobs that are available, things like that, that has been the strategy that has been suggested. Either more jobs or a better education system. Would you care to comment on the likeihood of the success of that kind of strategy here in Boston?

Jay Forrester: I'd like to ask a question, I really don't presume to know the answer to this, I'd like to see what you think really about those unemployment figures because I suspect that in many ways they're quite fictious, and let me tell you why. A person who is on welfare is in a sense employed. He's not got powerful incentives to go and find a job. I'm told by employers that they just repeated experience the situation where an applicant comes in, they have an opening for him and he's qualified, the person says what is the net take home pay, he's told, and says "are you kidding, I'd do better on welfare". There's another group that you have to also take into account in Massachusetts, which is the person who doesn't want to work full time, housewives who are the second wage earners in the family, and perhaps want to work several months during the year, but simply do not want to work 12 months. And to a considerable extent these people are working for a period of time long enough to qualify for unemployment compensation, then stopping work and drawing unemployment as long as they can, and maybe staying off awhile longer and going back. I've talked to plant managers who say that almost his entire work force is made up of these sorts of people who take turns through the year. And so you have a group who are employed in exactly the way they would like to be.

We are a sufficently affluent society, jobs are sufficiently available for the skilled, then alot of people don't feel any real committment to stay with the jobs that they're in, especially true of the younger generation of college graduates. Now stop for a moment and think about that dynamic unemployment process. Suppose that a person voluntary takes off a summer, three months, once every four years. He holds a job for four years, and he decided he might find a better opportunity somewhere else, he leaves in some manner that perhaps allows him to be called unemployed, or even draw some sort of government compensation during the process and three months later takes a new job. If everyone did this, and I'm not suggesting for a moment that everyone does, that after all three months off in every four years doesn't seem like a very dramatic things in a society that's as well off as this one is, three months in four years is a quarter of a year off in four years, that's a 16th of the total time, 6% of the working time, 6% unemployment right there if everybody did that.

It's a very substantial contribution to a form of dynamic unemployment, I think this is especially important right now because most of the manufacturing economy is desperately unable to find people to fill jobs, and jobs are going overseas because we can not staff alot of jobs in this country. One cannot staff a foundry in this country I'm told and because no one is under enough economic pressure to make it necessary for him to work in a rather smoky, dirty foundry and so as a consequence we've moved our foundries to other countries, this has a direct impact on our foreign exchange problems and our rate of exchange and therefore on our inflation. I am connected with the company that found its production lines were going to be closed down for lack of great iron, casting, next week, and they hadn't solved this for paying $60,000 of air freight to bring casting in from Japan. The unemployment nationally speaking I am very suspicious of because everywhere I go I find that people are unable to hire the help that they need and the potential isn't congregating in a few places, like the central city, where I'll admit there aren't jobs, but it's being held there by social policies that are essentially competing with the working

economy. And by keeping separated both because enough economic help is given to make it possible to stay there and geographically they're separated so that it is very hard for the one individual who happens to be in Boston to ever see that job that is out in Ohio, and so he's kept here by the social policies to make it possible that makes it possible to be here and he never connects with the places where work is. I don't want to say that's all of the story, and I'm not saying there isn't something in the way of a real hardship, but I am saying that alot of the unemployment is governmental created, and that alot of the inflation and faltering standard of living problem is coming from pooling people out of the productive sector.

A great deal of the military budget, I believe, you can form your own opinion, I don't get my information from anywhere except the newspapers and radio and tv, but it seems to me that a very large part of military expenditure is motatived by the unemployment problem, in other words if there is a proposal to shut down a military base or unit the argument against it is largely that it will put people out of work. And in any kind of slight economic downturn as there is right now and as exists in speeches in Congress, a great deal of incentive to increase the military budget in order to cope with the pursumed unemployment, once you do that you pull people into that sector and then you keep them there and this process has been going on since the 30's, progressively step by step and is one of the reasons why we are in the kind of inflation difficulty that we are now in, so to some extent you see the cities are actively enhancing or increasing this difficulty because the central cities for various reasons have pulled at least a sector of the population geographically away from where the work is and are keeping them there, so at that point the urban politics and the national economic policies...

David Strohm: I've got to disagree with that. You're not incorporating a political systems in this systems outlook. I don't know of any city that actively tries to attract and keep low income people without jobs, I think much more than that is the jobs lead inot urban or exurban jurisdictions of refusing to accept those people and I think that rule points to a much broader question and that is where is the consensus comes from when you do in fact have that are not geographic and not rational. The whole systems approach assumes that one person could make a socially efficient decision and somehow bring that into effect. I would like to suggest that quite to the contrary there are very fundamental in this and any society - which have a very strong bearing on the social effecency.

Jay Forrester: I did not of course mean that people consequency diabolically and in other to produce evil have arrived at these policies. What I mean is that the things they did with the best of intentions for the purpose of alleviating hardship have in fact had the effect of producing alot of this economic segregation of the people separated from where the opportunities lie. I didn't mean of course in an evil sense that they tried to do this. I'm saying it's a consequence of what they did do. As far as the consensus goes I do not for a moment believe that it does or can come from on top. The reason for books like Urban Dynamics or World Dynamics is that these ideas must take root among the public because the issues are much too important and too different from past practices to be imposed from the top. You could not impose a reversal, a complete reversal of policy from the White House, you just can't do it. Any more than a corporate president can produce a complete reversal of policy in his corporation. Alot of people think there are organizations like corporations which do what the president says which is for the most part simply not true. I'm invovled in a $5 million a year corporation in which they are as a result of modeling that we're talking about, they are not conveniced that in fact they should reverse a set of policies that three generations of top management have made public speeches about as the basis for success, in other words they say we do these things this is why we are successful, it turns out those are the things that have caused them to lose 2/3 of their market share. These are exactly the things that are causing the high instabilty employment and therefore their great community and social problems. The management is now convinced that in fact they'll have to reverse what they had been bragging about and they're absolutly frustrated, partialy because of those policies simply permeate the entire organization and there are hundreds of people in that organization that can nod their head yes and do something quite different, and therefore the top management is absolutely helpless.

We had the interesting case study of the local Allston area trucking company in which a system dynamic study was made and it showed that the way in which trucks are loaded and the way in which one holes a truck until it can be built up before dispatching, a few things of that sort, in fact were the cause of one of their greatest difficulities. And that is if a two terminal trucking company ran from here to another city, what they observed over a period of time,business would build up in Boston but the trucks would all be at the other place and then they would get this squared and they get trucks in Boston and in a few weeks they would find that the trucks were in Boston but the business that was available was at the other end and this kept moving back and forth. You see the problem was that wherever the trucks are you have the less service, if there are more trucks at one particular terminal you've a better chance of filling orders and taking care of them quickly and getting them out, that increases your reputation, people realize you get the things out quickly so the business builds up but it also means you fill the trucks and send them to the other terminal and if they are unwilling to send back an empty truck, because it's obviously uneconomical for anybody that looks at the matter. Then you end up in a situation where your business moves back and forth and your empty trucks are in the wrong place. This was perfectly clear to management and a member of management actually participated in the study and so they gave a set of instructions to the shipping room and to the fellows who actually do the work to no avail whatever, because it was obvious to this country that you don't make money by sending empty trucks around the country or half full. It was never implemented successfully until they want back through the entire urban dynamics study and the model and the assumptions in it, and the dynamic output with the high school graduates who were loading trucks, and then you could buy the shipping platform at noon, and hear these people discussing the model, knowledgably knowing what was in, why, and at this point the policy could be implemented because it was accepting and understanding, but on a very limited scale. In the national case it's likewise difficult but in many ways I think is easier to get a policy reversal in the U.S. than in business.

David Strohm: That I would have to disagree with in terms of just about every example you cited today. The example of the military base closing.

Hank Emerson: I guess we'll have to agree that the meeting is over, so we're informal now.

Alex Ganz: Speaking as a person who was and is a great admirer of yours, Prof. Forrester, both when I was in the socio-economic field at M.I.T. and my experience now with the city, and especially one who recognizes the great contribution that you've made in the urban field, in pointing to the need to look at the whole urban system. The interrelationship between jobs and people in housing,a feature that many of my present colleagues I recall didn't fully recongize and also speaking as one who feels that the city has benefited tremendously in this past 6 months because of the kinds of questions that urban dynamics has raised and posed to our planning effort, questions that have been measurably useful in spirting us new thinking, new work, new ways of looking at our plans all of which has been tremendously positive.I would like to pose the following kind of question. Looking at the urban scene as a system, we've appreciated what happens when we launch social programs without the resources base or the job base to support them. What is the possibility of reversing the process, that is to say a process where by we introduce an improvement in the job base or improvement in the resource base? What is the margin for both the social programs with population growth that one can aspire to looking at not the very long term nor the very short term but let's say the medium term?

Jay Forrester: Well if we start by realizing that neither Rome or Boston was built in a day and that there is a cumulative aspect to what one does I think one can expect that in spite of all that relatively results from some kinds of actions and never the less a cumulating one I would think in the medium term which I take is 5 to 10 years, that you could have quite alot of impact for let us say a great deal of differential impact, including any set of policies aimed at a particular set of goals. Let us say the oppsite of those policies. If you take the two extremes in 5 or 10 years you could produce situations that are quite a distance.

One problem here is that we may he hoping for perfection in our cities, and I think it's quite clear from the studies we've done that one is not going to have the utopian city, that there has to be a price paid somewhere One of the major lessons

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that has been articulated more in later work than in the Urban Dynamics book, is the idea of trade offs between different components of attractiveness. If you improve some aspect of the city, no matter what it is, you improve the entirety that becomes the composite of the appearence of the city sum and this has the effect of drawing in some additional people from the outside, the larger the population for the most part the more you push down the quality of education, parks, more people relative to jobs force unemployment, so you keep the city in balance in such a way that most of what on is doing is in fact affecting the population and not effecting the quality of life. Now there's a kind of despondent note in what I'm saying which is you can't make it the perfect city but that you can have perfect mixes of these components and then you look around at contracting cities, you take Houston or Colorado Springs and say why is it different from Manhattan or Boston. You find that all these cities are essentially in equilibrium with the environment but for different combinations and reasons, growing healthly economic city has better job opportunities. There's not any more opportunity to move to another city than there is to Boston or New York because they're more or less in balance, and yet there's very different sorts of cities and one has the choice before him that is exhibited by different kinds of cities as you look around the countr, you choose to be like one of them or like the other. To a considerable extent all cities are in equilibrium with one an other but each city has different priorities.

It seems to me the most alarming part of this is the policies that are produced in the Northeast area are now being adopted by the other states.

David Strohm: My question again is how do we get from here to there. I'm aware of the policies and where do you build a consensus to change that, if in fact those policies for the existing configuration produce political cleavages which motivate a certain change.

Jay Forrester: Let me comment on the political cleavage. It's been my experience that the whole process of building a model, being explict about the assumptions, tends to reduce argument because alot of the controversy is arising from semantics and misunderstanding and not realizing what the other person is saying, and never having clarified the issue so that there is an opportunity for people to agree. I've found this to be true with respect to housing vs. migration, for example. We had three people who've written book reviews on the subject. They start by setting the calcution of that city is not the things that has any effect on migration. What has effect on migration is the cost of housing, and other things. So we said how would you like to represent the price of housing. Well the price depends on how many people want to live there, the ratio of people to housing. So they were willing to say the price goes up as density goes up and as price goes up migration goes down.

David Strohm: That however is a single issue. I'd like to take one of the life time examples you talked about. For example the tendency toward increasing capital intensity industry. As far as I can see there is no way in the world that you're going to convience people who are making decisions about capital intensity who are under the gun in terms of constraints within which they work to reverse their path and become noncompetive.

Jay Forrester: My own experience is parallel to one told me by a professor in California. He told me in his experience almost all undergraduate and graudate students had read Limits to Growth and understood in some depth the implications of World Dynamics and for the most part accepted it. He also said almost every chief executive officer of corporations had read it, knows about it, accepts it, at the middle level of the corporations they've never heard of it. This is my own experience. My World Dynamics book came out in June, 1971, comes to grow a much more popular book came out in March, 1972. In the intervening time World Dynamics had enough disability that I was asked to go in Janaury, 1972 before Limits of Growth came out, to a meeting in Trinidad of 60 chief executive officers of world wide national corporations. The first few minutes of my talk they were willing to lay aside the question of whether or not you can limit growth. They took that as accepted ground rules. Things can not go on like they are, that they would state in the first few minutes. What they wanted to know is what can they do about it, what should we do about it, given the present competive environment and can we do anything about it and what will happen to us if we don't do anything. Those were the kinds of questions they were interested in and those are

the kinds of questions we don't have answers to because that's much more difficult to answer than to present the story for why there is a problem.

Hank Emerson: Even coming closer to home, how long did you spend with Dick Hill and all the second vice presidents of our bank at lunch several weeks ago, couple of hours?

Jay Forrester: Two hours, and I would say no differences on these points. There is great uneasyness particularly at the top level where the visability expends outside the orginzation in the middle level, the old tradition still prevails and this is where more of the decisions are made. So it's time and education and waiting for the pressures to seep in. There was a great fuss and alot of rejection of World Dynamics and Limits of Growth when it came out, and for a period of time a dying out of interest. Then the oil crisis came and these two books were brought back into the times, back into view. There has been private citizen committees trying to get urban dynamics before the public attention. Yet we have to realize just how long it will take because we'll be going up against corporations and they are slower to respond than the public.

Transcript of the BRA-MIT Urban Dynamics
Advisory Committee Inc.

Dialogue Series on Planning and Development
for Boston's Future

Parkman Conference Center Program June 13, 1974

The Honorable Kevin H. White, Mayor of Boston-Final Dinner Meeting

Hank Emerson: In searching for my thoughts as to what might be significant about tonight, other than the fact that it's the end of quite an interesting series of productive meetings, I thought of something that Lou Alfeld pointed out in his last paper. Our meetings this winter involved 54 business guys and 55 city guys who have grown to know each other and understand each other and trust each other, I hope. We have not always shared the same point of view, but we certainly don't need introductions any more and we're ready to do something. We seem to understand each other, know each other, trust each other, and we seem to be ready to do something with that knowledge.

If I were asking the key question tonight my question would really be: "on the brink of what"? It seems to me that we have a group of 109 guys who have met and talked about where this city is, where it's going, what are it's assets, liabilities and problems. And as near as I can tell each of those 109 guys is sincerely interested in doing what he can to preserve the assets of this city, to make a better city. I think that we are going to hear from another fellow who has that sincere interest, and it's my pleasure - he needs no other introduction - to introduce the Mayor of the city.

Mayor White: I don't want to correct Hank at the outset because I know he's worked hard on all of these series, but somebody said part of the process has been candor with one another. It's always said but it's never true of a mayor: "he needs no introduction". No one desperately needs an introduction - and a charitable one and a flattering one - more than a mayor does. But I will accept the business austerity to get to the heart of the matter at hand and know that there was no partisan intention.

First, let me say I'm not going to speak at great length tonight, although I have as much time as necessary to be here. I'm pleased to be here simply because this is a culmination of a lot of efforts by a lot of people over a long period of time, and it's been along time coming. I'm pleased merely that it's been an end of something and an acknowledgement by Hank at the outset tonight that it's the beginning of something else.

He said that we've had a great exchange, it's an editorial we I don't deserve, it means you and those that have been in attendance at one time or another and gained a better understanding of each other. And then Hank said - where do we go from here? I'm not sure that I can easily point the way, but I can tell you that one of the highest accolades in the public sector is to say simply "he understands the problem". It's always easy from the outside to offer a solution. But inside, on a daily basis, wrestling with shifting priorities in the public arena, it's harder. When someone comes in, and I've talked to people over a long period of time, I come to one conclusion that to me is an important one: he understands the dimensions of the problem; either the one that we're wrestling with or, in a general sense of the word, understands the limitations, the parameters of power of what this city can and cannot do, or what the problem is in specifics. It's always going back to the basics that hurts the most, specifically for those of us who seem to have so little time to get back to the basics

The commonalty in this room, besides interests, is that you are a group that is required to find solutions, and those who seek to find those solutions from you assume that you've already done the ground work, and you already know the problem. It is not true,for the lack of interest or concern or even time shared. It's that the problem shifts along with the priorities.

There are great rewards, outside the personal ones, that the city enjoys with the

private sector from all of this over many months. When I got the letter from ~~Gordon~~ HANK I noticed the key words in the dialogue were growth and conservation. That conveyed an understanding at the outset, because that's what it's all about in the city both the growth and the conservation, I'm sure somebody touched on those two words in the early dialogues or discussions. But it is critical because I'm not sure that either the public or the private sector saw conservation as a key word. I'm not talking in terms of ecology, I'm talking in terms of sustaining the body politic or the physical aspects of the city itself. I think we all saw change and growth and maybe the words are interchangeable. It would be the greatest thing we could understand: growth and conservation mean the same things and they are not alternatives at all. I have to run an administration that has sought to respond to problems that have beseiged it over a period of 7 years, not always successfully, almost always enthusiastically. I've often done it, more often than not, in contradiction to the policies pursued by my predecessor. I've done it alone. I've very seldom called up and formed committees, reached out to the private sector or the academic community, and I've created a certain isolation that wasn't intended. In a way it was the conviction that I had the tools and the resources to solve most of the problems myself; some of it cocky, some confidence, but never intended. It was my job.

It seems late in the game to realize that I was doing the job the wrong way, in two ways wrong really. One, I found myself for the first three or four years wrestling with others, the state, federal government on major things like urban renewal over which my control was limited, at least in those days and dwindling at a given time. Model cities is another example, wrestling for their funds, the direction of their programs and ingoing the basic problems and responsibility: crime, refuse collection. I found out that they were my prime responsibilities, and that I couldn't even solve those without reaching out for the talent,concern and the commitment of the business community.

If you're on the brink of something I hope it is sustained cooperation and the graduation present - if this is a class - has been presented by the efforts of both the private sector and the public in the improved bond rating. To anybody in Southie, it's not much to cheer about, the schools are more important, or maybe the L street bathhouse. But that's not to demean them. The bond rating was important, psychologically and proved conclusively that we couldn't have done it without the private sector. We couldn't have even gotten off the ground. When a class understands each others cases we did something that was psychologically significant. We had a very specific problem to solve within the realm of reality, not divorced from the necessity of thinking of theory, but we did and that's a nice reward at the end of spring.

I hope that you'll have these series continue. The development of lines of communication, which is another word for education, which is another word for execution ultimately. I hope there's some understanding we've all run or worked for corporations. Mine is public, yours is private. Mine has great diversity and shifting priorities. I don't think one of you represents a corporation with as much diversity, but I think we see there are different demands and disciplines for both and if we understand that then I'm confident that there's room for a good partnership. Now I didn't come to preach,as a matter of fact I thought maybe the best thing I could do with the limited time that we have was to learn questions in your mind, and I could try to answer some of the questions in your minds. My responses might be in contradiction with my department heads. In those cases I bow. That is not in diference of authority, obviously, I have it all. It's merely that they probably have the facts.

I want you to know though, if its any confort for you to realize at the end when you go back to the office tomorrow and the days to come, that I have treated you well. I respect the fact that you all will take over some key positions within the private sector over the years to come. Like a good politican I'm always playing my bets for the future,not in the past. For example, I fed you well, good food, a great desert. I want you to know this morning I had what's called a Council 11 - which is 11 of the more prominent businessmen - I invited them for breakfast. They all came at 8:00 a.m. prompt as always, I joined them , and when I walked in there wasn't a thing on the table, the place was empty,nobody expected them and we were all standing around looking at each other. So I take care of you much better than I take care of them, don't

think I cater to them for a minute, it's you that I cater to.

But the fact is I have reached out to the leadership of the business community to try and do what I hope you're going to do more successfully; draw parameters for discussion, that is resolved and discussed in greater depth by you in the days and weeks and months and years to come.

Hank Emerson: Dun, do you remember what you said at our last dinner meeting?

Mayor White: Well, 60 State Street is moving along.

Dun Gifford: Well that's just the first on the list. Mr. Mayor, in a serious vein, we do owe you a debt of gratitude, and the debts of gratitude are not singular they're plural, for what you did here with the Parkman House. It is a house which we've taken advantage of many luncheons over the year. It's done with taste and grace and something of which all of us are proud. And we're glad that visitors from out of town do come here and do see it and make use of it. We know that was a personal project of your own and we're grateful for that. Many of us feel privileged that we were able to help out, some of us were not but all of us are proud that it is here. Before it was finished we were able to use the city hall dining facilities, and then again that was very gracious and something which we can all be proud as Bostonians. Beyond the physical facilities that you have made available to this group, through your own personal staff...

Mayor White: I just want you to know before you go any further. I think it's only fair that this is being recorded for Teddy.

Dun Gifford: We couldn't have done the work that we did without your deputy mayors: Ed Sullivan, Bob Kiley, Bob Vey, the BRA people, Alex and Bob Kenney and Eli Post, and Jim Young and Kirk O'Donnell who talked to us about Little City Halls. We had a dialogue which was difficult to begin but I think did develop into something that is meaningful. We do feel and I think we're discussing publishing a booklet about the vast extent of cooperation extended by you and by the city's agencies at your direction.

Last week we had a long meeting about the future of this group, with the obvious resources that it has, with the commitment that it has expended, with the commitment matched by your own staff and department heads. What do we do with the resource which has been developed and which does exist. Clearly part of that is working as closely as possible with you in the implementation of the plan for the city in the next decade as you approve. Another part of it is working with your council of 11, and many of us here work work daily and closely and intimately with members of that group and in fact many are staff for the projects in the subcommittees they are undertaking.

I think our principal question as we adjourned our long meeting last week was that we want very much to use the resources of communication and trust that's developed over this year and a half. I think we define urban dynamics to be something like Newton where for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction. If there's a housing policy it has implications for transportation, education and all the others. You live with that on a daily basis. The input of the members of your administration has been sharply defining for us how every day, every hour you must react to those inherent conflicts of dealing with constituencies, many of whom distrust each other and are in conflict with each other and how on your behalf members of your administration have to advise you on that. That's been very helpful to us. I think that with the urban dynamics concept of the interrelationship maybe we have been some help in pointing out and adding inputs that might not otherwise regularly come to members of your administration. We feel we have. We believe we have and we believe that is of principal importance.

What we really want to do is to be of whatever assistance we can to you and therefore to the city in the implementation of the plan as you finally approve it. If you have priorities in areas, whether they are housing fix up or tax reform or policies to do with transportation or whatever they may be, what ever you decide they are, our principal statement is that we want to work with you and continue to work with your administration in resolving and pressing forward to a vigorous solution.

If it's legislation, if it's tax policies or red lining or whatever it maybe.

I think our main question, apart from specifics, is your judgement of what you think we can most do to help you carry forth your programs and policies? With that statement we would sit down with ourselves as a group, with the council of 11 with whatever members of the legislature are necessary, if any, whatever it maybe. In other words we do feel that we have some experience and some clout and we want to help. That's the message we have for you. It maybe be unfair in front of all your department heads to pick a priority Mr. Mayor, we understand that.

Gordon MacKay: Perhaps one that's a bit more specific that might lead into a general response. First the specific. I'm not sure that everyone here may understand the Council of 11, and more important your feelings on how you see that helping. And then second, I think we always have this difficult transition that it's so easy for us to form ad hoc groups and go through a certain educational process. To a lot of us the cutting edge that comes is how do you take that step over the line from an ad hoc group to becoming a constructive part of the process. So that would be the second question. I think a lot of us would be interested in that response as we attempt to draw some specifics out as to how best might we look toward the fall.

Mayor White: Let me take first a quick capsule of how the Council of 11 came to be formed and secondly you want to know how you can participate in the decision making process in the months ahead. On the Council of 11, it's interesting and I alluded to it earlier. I suppose there are many reasons to a given decision, never one, and I alluded to the fact that I had pretty much moved away from the business community, it's certainly not the response that was given by John and I've done things pretty much on my own. I said the reason why I thought I could do it better, etc.

In fact there was another reason, I remember once going over to a meeting of the very famous Vault coordinating committee group. I spoke, I was prepared. I've forgotten what the issue was about. I'll tell you about a lack of understanding - like an old politician I'll begin to wander a little.

After the Martin Luther King situation all hell was breaking loose in the city and everyone was apprehensive, nervous. No one, least of all I, knew which way to turn, but I knew I was going to have to give the direction we'd have to turn. I decided that I'd go down to the coordinating committee, and ask for money, some support. What I wanted to do was be able to move around the community and quickly say, without saying next year - I'll put up a basketball court, do this, do that, things that I could do immediately, and develop a confidence immediately with them. So down I went and told them about this need of having confidence in the mayor's capacity to do something immediately - and that it was too late to budget but I couldn't wait. I couldn't say I'll be back down here next year, and that I'd like some funds. There was a little stirring in the crowd, and everybody shifted to attention, and then somebody said, well how much Kevin? And I said well I've tried to give this thought and I feel about a million dollars would be adequate.

I don't know if you know your bosses very well, there was dead silence. What I was basing my estimate on, not a ball park figure, but that it cost close to 3/4 of a million just to run for mayor, never mind trying to hold the city together, and it was an estimate. When I left, George Seybolt walked me back, and came up to my office and started talking at great length, and I was frustrated and knew that they cared but I didn't get through. He said to me, Kevin you don't understand, there is different language, and you're not talking it. Their definitions and your definitions are not interchangeable, they're totally different. When you use a word you thought meant one thing, they quickly from their own experience interpreted it an another, it was a question of dialogue exchange.

Very interesting, in politics we have our dialogue, there's a language of politics. So too with the business world. So that was one of the failings, understanding the dialogue between the two, the language, but there were common terms.

And I then decided - also reaching the maturing process of knowing the private sector was important - I wanted to create a group that was more immediately responsive to me, there was nothing mysterious about that. And we talked about expanding the coordinating committee or cutting it down or what do we do, who should be included, who should be left out. Ultimately what we were looking for, not to over talk this,

was a group with the diversity of background and input obviously,who could help to set, again that word parameters, general policy.

I've come to the conclusion that what contact I had had with the business community was crisis oriented, that we would respond to panic, panic over road policy, panic over tax policy, panic that Sarge and I were at a point of agreement or disagreement, in which a lot of policy had been implemented long before it arrived at our level. There was more work to undo than to do in some cases, politically as well as administravely. I came to realize this answers in part your second question, that I want to establish a concil, with that diversity I spoke about, in which would be defined what we were going to touch, and with maturity what we were going to leave alone.

Once having done that the question was whether we could structure subcommittees that could bring input, not men of equal rank, this wasn't an exclusive club, it wasn't who was in, it had no bearing on the subject. It was simply that,and this is a critical point to your performance in the fall and beyond, a very high percentage of public problems and issues are decided, like in corporations long before they hit the top. I would hope that there be more of a dialogue, and this is precisely what this is, between you and Vey over whether we even should be building schools. And Salvucci is a classic case, Fred is like a hobgoblin in some people's mind, just the name sends shivers up people's spine, a fanatic bent on I don't know what. No, Fred is very highly intelligent, M.I.T. graduate who has an understanding of city problems but can at times begin to tilt, tilt because he's pulled, by neighborhood people that he works with. Only at that level,if he is pulled back through discussion with you people,can balance be achieved. Your ad hoc discussions become, in fact, something that performs when it puts my own staff, my own people back on course. You may not be able to see the decision you make with your name on a piece of paper, and no one likes to play the role of the unsung hero, but the fact is just communicating at that level will make a big difference in deciding how questions get up to me in the first instance. Or, how it gets up to Bleiken and a Hill or anyone else from your point of view because they will take your presentation with more credability than they will take Salvucci's.By nature, we will take our own with more credability then we will take yours. So I'm saying there's a very real contribution that you can make in the decision making process, when we hone down on what fits.

I said this morning give me an answer to one problem. We were talking about taxes, housing, should the port authority be taxed? You can touch on a lot of things. Tell me should we touch the central artery, yes or no? I have the money, it's there to burn. It's awful tough when they say you can have this candy if you take this money to buy that candy. It's a very real question. I'd say 90% of the business community would say my god no, I think there's uncertainty on my own staff, and maybe even leaning against. But if it's unattended by you,the pressures and pull will move the thing forward,you'll be at the last battle ramp, hoping to stave off something that's really already been committed.

And if you want to know about the chaos and confusion, born of good intentions, of public process of issues, you don't have to look any further than this racial imbalance issue. Even I don't know where it is today and I don't mean that lightly. Between the black causus and Bartley and the Governor no one knows. It is because it's a classic case of a last minute panic to resolve an issue that's been staring everybody in the face for 9 years. It would have been put off till next year if they could figure away out of it. That is not the way to resolve public and private issues, and that much this administration learned.

I'll end on that, maybe your question was all inclusive, and it is simply that I wouldn't be bitter, that's not a part of my public posture, but I would be disappointed, and I think you yourselves would be if you didn't see that you have a great opportunity in the fall. There will be frustration, but if we quit on that we shouldn't have had the first meeting.

Hank Emerson: Thank you very much. I really think we've got something when we think of both the words growth and conservation as two concepts that have to be compatible. Have a good summer.